Cedars of Lebanon

By

Laela Ateah-Lester

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INTRODUCTION

This is the true story of Michael Ateah and his wife Shafia, my father and mother, who came to Canada from Mount Lebanon, Syria, in the Middle-East. They met each other in the Red River Valley for the first time, and after a brief courtship were married there.

In 1912 they came and settled on a small lonely Peninsula, (Victoria Beach) on Lake Winnipeg, in Northern Manitoba. A Peninsula, where Michael saw in its dense pine and evergreen forest, a miniature replica and many other virtues attributed to the cedars of Lebanon, the forests of his ancient home Village of Moukhtara.

Here Michael and Shafia raised their large family of ten children, among whom was their eldest son, Alfred Ferade, whose fine qualities were not overlooked by the people around him and by the folks who made this famous resort of Manitoba their summer home.

Alfred Ferade Ateah, who lived like a lion, and was given by the people, the burial of a prince, at his untimely death.

Cedars of Lebanon

CHAPTER I

It was mating time on the Pine Crest Fur Farm. Sir Greenglade, gorgeous Silverblu adult male mink and prize winner of his class at the most recent Manitoba Fox and Mink Show, leaped and raced up and down his long narrow wire enclosure. His clear distinct chirp echoed and re-echoed through the long ranch shed until at last, like a hunters horn, every male mink on the Pine Crest ranch took up the challenge, turning the mink sheds into a veritable bedlam of mating calls.

March was here again, and you could feel the breath of spring in the cold crisp frosty air. The hard snow crusted roofs of the mink sheds shone and sparkled radiantly like

millions and billions of diamonds, in the early morning sun. High above the white steel posts and wire enclosure of Pine Crest towered heavily laden pine branches of snow. Intermittently through the air came a faint sweet scent of the evergreens as they swayed in the light wind.

I walked to the ranch gate and automatically looked up. Over the gate hung the sign, "Pine Crest Fur Farm", Owner Rex Lester. I always liked that sign with my husband's name at the bottom of it. It spoke of something accomplished, and it gave me a feeling of security and happiness. Something three youngsters and myself had sorely missed for a few trying seasons.

Then, as I stood silently at that gate, and listened in the bright March sun to the many strange sounds that emerged from Pine Crest, a verse came to me with startling suddeness, and for the next moment or two remained static on my mind. It was the 38 verse from Chapter four in the Gospel of St. John. Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into

their labours. Of course I knew what this meant spiritually, but somehow that morning it appeared to me in a more literal form.

Alfred Ferade Ateah, my brother began this great line of mink ranching on the Peninsula in the year 1932, and now we were in it heart and soul. At first because Ferade saw in it a great purpose for the Community as a whole, and secondly because it looked to us as a fair proposition for making a good living. So we the Rex Lester's and a handful of people who consisted mainly of Ferade's brothers and sisters, folks whom Ferade had encouraged, and even coaxed to enter into this industry. We began to work with untiring efforts after Ferade's untimely death, clinging to mink ranching in times when unsurmountable obstacles appeared everywhere in the fur trade.

We had indeed entered into his labours, and I sincerely hoped as I lifted the latch of the ranch gate, and moved toward shed number one on the Pine Crest Fur Farm, that this took in the spiritual sense of that short

verse in St. John's Gospel, even more than the literal.

As I walked into shed number one, I carried under one arm a large chocolate box, I always liked that box, because two years previously Rex had given it to me at Christmas. It was the largest box of candy I had ever received, and even though I knew what it could do to my waist-line, it gave me a wonderful feeling just to get one that big.

In the box I carried an assortment of articles, including several milk bottle caps, on the backs of which, I had the previous evening, placed numbers. These tags were tacked on the individual mink pens. The pockets of my wool-lined gabardine parka were also stuffed with accessories. These were colored pencils and chalks, which were used to identify the several types of mink on Pine Crest, when they were yet in the di-hybrid or hybrid stage, and consequently were mostly all dark brown in color, the original standard color of mink.

In recent years through scientific research

and breeding, it appears that in the colors of mink, the rainbow is the limit. It can be truly said, that these mutation mink, and this the general identification of these many colored animals, are really breath taking. The many soft pastel shades of this luxurious fur which is now accessible, are far beyond anything the fur trade had ever dreamed of not so very long ago.

Someday, and in the near future I hope, Rex and I are planning to build a shed or two for each type of mink on the ranch, and then I can happily discard all this colored marking equipment.

I had no sooner reached the second mink shed, when my foot slipped off the narrow path, our ranch fisherman had made, and down I went into the snow up to my knees. Trap in hand Rex came hurrying out of the adjoining Standard shed, and just in time to my rescue. Laughing good-natured as usual he pulled me out of my plight, then left me abruptly standing there, and hurried back into the next shed. He had several last

minute jobs to do that day, and there was very little time to lose.

After Rex left I stepped into the Silverblu and Silverblu Breath-of-Spring shed, and proceeded to tag the pens with the milk bottle caps. We always found the caps easy to procure, and they seemed the most convenient for solving our problem of identifying the animals at the time.

The males were still chirping, and causing quite a commotion through-out the ranch. And it was with a sigh of relief, that I thanked my lucky stars that mating time came only once a year to Pine Crest and to all mink ranches everywhere for that matter.

Ever since we started mink ranching, I had always assisted Rex to a certain extent on the ranch. I did not do any of the heavier work but did assist at such jobs as tagging individual pens, checking over nest boxes for hay and so on. Later it automatically fell upon me to assist in picking out our breeders at pelting time, and as time went on, I found that from long experience, I could

pick out the fine points of a mink in a very short time. Thus saving Rex considerable amount of time at pelting season.

CHAPTER II

Rex and I were very proud of the several fine strains of mink we had at "Pine Crest" they were beautiful animals, well fed and their condition always kept up to par. I could not help but stand and admire Sir Greenglade when I reached his pen. He was a large medium light Silverblu, and his heavy even coat of silky fur shone luxuriantly as he moved about in his pen. I ran my gloved hand lightly over the wire, and he stood up on his hind feet, following with lightening swiftness every motion I made with my finger tips, his pink nose keeping very close to the wire. Some of these animals could prove quite vicious at times, but not Sir Greenglade, who was very much like his sire the first Silverblu male to be purchased for "Pine Crest", he was as gentle as a kitten and as harmless.

As I pulled my hand away from the wire,

the sun streaming in between the roof and the pen, caught my watch, and automatically I glanced at my wrist. Time was flying, and I moved on to the next pen where our red ribbon adult "Silverblu" female lay curled luxuriously in a nest of soft hay. Inwardly, realizing the fleeting moments, I took one quick admiring glance at her. "Nice line for raising champions", I thought, "My singing commercial for the past three and a half months."

Ever since we won those unexpected prize ribbons, eleven of them out of sixteen entries, at the mink show, I have had that nice bouyant feeling of skiing over mounds of crusted snow, whenever the thought of them crossed my mind.

There is so much detail work to successful mink ranching, that when we started my husband simply could not manage to do it all by himself. At that time we could not afford to hire any help, in fact Rex had to hold another job as well, to help support our large growing family.

When Rex and I were married, I had three children of my own, by a previous marriage, one son and two daughters, Berton Joseph, Mary Ellen and Vernon Lauraine. And by the time we started fur farming we had three children of our own, two sons and one daughter. Glen Reginald, Lorne William and Marina Lila Edith. That meant there were eight of us to feed and clothe. I felt it was only my duty to help in providing for our family under these circumstances. And anyway, I was quite accustomed by that time to work at anything I could lay my hands on, for I had been helping to support my first little family all the while we were living under my parents roof.

However, it was at the Manitoba Fox and Mink Show that the Peninsula mink actually came into their own, we had been waiting and hoping for that day, because we came to the conclusion by that time, that only by proving to the world that we had carried on the fruits of his labors to the finest end, could we build an appropriate memorial to

the memory of Alfred Ferade Ateah, Pioneer mink rancher of the Peninsula.

Ferade who saw a good thing for the small group of families who barely eked a living, saw the Peninsula's great possibilities as a mink ranching community. When he passed this life in the prime of his manhood on April 7th, 1939, at the age of thirty-five, he appeared like the verse in Hebrews, He died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.

Those of us who knew him as friend and brother, knew too, that having accomplished these visions of more security for his loved ones and the community as a whole, he had not lived that short life in vain.

Exactly ten years later, in April 1949, Dr. H. C. Collins, V.S., D.V.M. 43 of the Fur and Game Experimental Station at the University of Manitoba, Department of Mines and Natural Resources, Winnipeg, Manitoba, passed away too. I would like to pay tribute here to the late Dr. H. C. Collins for his unselfish and untiring efforts toward assisting the

many fur farmers of Manitoba, and for the great part he played in making The Manitoba Fox and Mink Show of 1946 a big success, the show that put the mink ranchers of the Peninsula on the map.

CHAPTER III

Automatically I lifted the small hammer from the pocket of my parka and proceeded to finish the job of tagging the pens. Sir Greenglade now thoroughly exhausted from racing to and fro from the early hours of the morning, ceased his mating calls, and comfortably curled himself at the door of his pen. Where the strong noonday sun of the season; magnificently displayed the gorgeous richness of his fur.

My job completed for that morning I stepped into the bright sunlight and waited for Rex to accompany me to the house, something he always expected me to do.

As I stood there waiting, my thoughts wandered as they are wont to do in the spring of the year, and I remembered Ferade as he looked in the days when the Peninsula, and we, were younger. His heavy mop of

dark brown hair as it lay closely curled over a brow and profile of a greek god. The Alfred Ferade for whom, in that worthy magazine, "Fur of Canada", appeared the following excerpt at his untimely death.

"Manitoba fur farmers remember when Alfred Ferade Ateah of Victoria Beach, first came to their gatherings. A young man of striking appearance dressed in a buckskin tunic, breeches and high boots. Even then it was apparent that he was a man of strong character who spoke his mind with clearness and sincerity. He saw in the business of fur farming, an opportunity for himself and for the other man, a vehicle of which waste might be turned into a livlihood for many people."

"Born on the shores of Lake Winnipeg of Syrian parents, Alfred Ferade Ateah began life with but little material inheritance. But from his ancient and cultured people he received a rich inheritance of lofty idealism, joined with dynamic energy of mind and body. The qualities of generosity, selflessness, and high honour were reflected in the

countenance, and in the career of this man. He is deeply mourned."

From the few wild mink he himself had trapped, and by buying the odd wild mink from Indians, Ferade started fur farming. His first mink pen was made from a discarded bed spring, which if I remember rightly was given him for the purpose, by one of the early summer residents of this Peninsula. This was in the year 1927.

Many heartbreaking drawbacks occurred in the years to come. Like for instance; when he found a mother mink with six young kits, and he jubilantly walked into the kitchen with the kits in his hat, and the mother in a tin box, only to find the next morning the mother had gnawed her way through two bed springs, carrying her young away with her. Then again that laughable incident, when he waited for several weeks for the first pair of mink to produce young, only to discover later they were both males.

From this very obscure beginning Ferade carried on. He still carried on, when his

first pelts brought only three dollars each at the fur auction sale. That sale made him all the more determined to improve his stock. From then on the struggle took on a different angle. It was, only the very best mink for Victoria Beach. When some of the earlier ranchers whom he had started in mink ranching were driving their own trucks, purchased from mink pelts, Ferade still rode horse-back and invested every dollar in fine mink. He never missed a fur show, for he knew that there was the place to study fine mink, and other fur farmers found in him a keen competitor.

I shall end this chapter for Ferade with another excerpt from the "Fur of Canada". The bridal of Alfred Ferade Ateah was a life enterprize contracted under the same financial aspect as the mink ranch. Little capital in cash, but with high values set upon each other by the contracting parties. Beginning at the end of a wild canoe ride across Lake Winnipeg's Traverse Bay, in a storm, to catch the minister who performed the ceremony,

the marriage blossomed into a thing of harmony, happiness and understanding. A boy and girl was born, reasonable prosperity came. A home arose beside the bay. The home became the Mecca of all who sought aid and comfort. And no one came in vain for Alfred Ateah and his wife found joy in helping.

They saw a splendid design for living in the Example of the Great Galilean and they followed it literally and faithfully. Their doors and their hearts were open to all mankind, regardless of creed, color or race. On this gentle philosophy they prospered, proving thereby that ruthlessness and greed are not elements of success.

This man of rare mould has departed, but his courageous and kindly spirit will remain to comfort and encourage those who remain.

"He was buried on the Peninsula by the people, and amid the pines he loved. And in the woodsman's shirt he always wore. It was the mantle and raiment of a true gentleman."

CHAPTER IV

High up on the gable ends of the mink sheds at Pine Crest, hung small square pieces of galvanized tin in groups on which numbers in black and green were painted. These were identifications of the mink purchased from Alfred Ferade's ranch, "Manimic", while he was living, and were hung there by Bert before he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, in the second world war. The mink were bought to improve the breeding stock on the "Pine Crest Fur Farm".

"Thank God Bert was home again," I thought, and I, his mother could look up into the lovely pastel blue of the sky and see the silver wings of the small forestry planes as they flew over "Pine Crest" and Lake Winnipeg, winging their way toward the dense dark green forests of our north country, from their bases at Lac du Bonnet.

I could realize to the full their beauty now

without that indescribable pain that clutched at my heart strings, as I though of Bert as a rear air gunner, in the Royal Canadian Air Force's "Lion Squadron", making his tour of operations over enemy territory.

Nerve racking times then, Bert his wonderful deep blue eyes that held in them generations of Ireland's star dotted lakes, inter-mingled with four generations under blue Canadian skies. How grateful and humble I felt, when my eyes beheld his handsome face, and his lithe young figure; displayed on his return after completing his thirty-three tours of operations, in the smart uniform of a Flying Officer.

It seemed incredible, Bert a Commissioned Officer with only the limited education I had managed to give him. I held my head high, but mostly because of the fact, that by fine inspiration and hard work Bert had achieved much with the little he had.

Ferade would have been proud of Bert too, if he were only here. A tightness came into my throat, when I thought of those trying

days, coming home heartbroken and alone with my young children, how Ferade his noble personality sensing my bitter disillusion, took Bert then a small frail little fellow of three, into his strong suntanned arms, and held his golden curly head close to him. Ever since then Bert was very near to Ferade, and I loved the good influence he planted in my young son's life.

The sound of a motor vehicle roused me from my reverie, I looked up and at the bottom of the hill I saw amid the pines and leafless cherry bushes and above the wide spreading junipers that flanked the hillside, a flash of modern green go by. It was my brother Edward in his suburban, happy as only a fellow could be who knew what a comfort a good home and a good wife, and three fine youngsters were, after four years of service in The Royal Canadian Air Force, away from them during the last war.

Eddy's ranch, the "Peninsula", was situated just below Pine Crest, on a flat where tall jack pines swayed rhythmically, whenever a

south wind blew, and cool spring waters flowed in a well that was really appreciated by the ranchers on the hill.

A few yards beyond the "Peninsula Fur Farm", lay the "Silver Arrow Mink Ranch", where my sister Sophia and her husband ranched. The Silver Arrow was really buzzing with energy these days, for Sophia's and Charlie's three sons were home, and world war two, in which they all served their King and Country, was now a thing of the past.

And now their youngest son Freddie can roam the mainland hills at leisure in search of game, and dream of those Army days when he was the best shot of the Company at Camp Shilo.

Just off the main highway of the Peninsula, is the "Muskeg" mink ranch, where another sister Freda, and her husband Alex's sons, Lloyd, a Royal Canadian Air Force veteran of the last war, and Robert now of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Jackie the youngest take pride in showing the Family ranch to their many friends.

On the old farm home site, lies Johnny's ranch, "The Victoria Beach Mink Ranch", and just below it Sammy's "Sleepy Valley" both ranches are snuggled in a valley of balsam and spruce. There Johnny my youngest brother, a veteran of the R.C.A.F., clings closely to the Ateah tradition of mink ranching, and keeps only the finest and best of mink.

Rex was by my side now, and when we reached the ranch gate, he automatically slipped his arm about my waist, I marvelled at its smooth strength. Together we slowly walked toward the house while Chief, our part Police, and part Undistinguishable, but fine looking dog, raced before us, his long nose and upright ears plainly showing all indications of approaching ground hog days.

CHAPTER V

Pine Crest Fur Farm is built on the crest of a hill of pine and juniper, with the juniper bursting through the sandy soil everywhere in short round wide spreading clumps. Giving the hill and sloping ground about it the beauty attributed so often to this Peninsula which lies on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg.

The ranch consists of eight acres of land, and it lies on a part of a quarter section of Section Ten, Township Twenty, Range Seven East, which is the old original "Ateah Homestead" which was divided by Michael and Shafia amongst their ten children.

Shortly after we were married, Rex and I were given this piece of land, and Michael and Shafia went so far as to let me choose the site for which you may be sure we were very grateful. For I can assure you that if they had been eight acres in the Garden of

Eden, they would not have been more acceptable to Rex and myself, and we immediately began to plan our home.

It took some hard planning too on a very limited pocket-book. Rex owned a not to ancient chevrolet truck, which turned out to be a very valuable item in earning a living for the three Trainor youngsters, and ourselves at the time.

However, we both had several advantages which we knew would surmount any financial problem, and which we felt went far beyond the realm of hard cash, that would provide us with a security money could not buy. It was the fact that Rex and I were both young, very fond of each other, and very much adapted to this sort of life.

For though I had been born in the City of Winnipeg, I had lived the greater part of my life on Lake Winnipeg, and Rex, though born in Macclessfield, Chestershire, England, had lived from the age of four at Belair, also on Lake Winnipeg.

Belair a small out of the way place was a

distance of about ten miles south of the Peninsula. A country where great hills of pine, birch and juniper flourished. And which from a distance gave it the aspect of a mountainous country covered over with thousands of evergreens.

The Lester homestead, "The Homelands" lay along the east shore of the lake. They lived in an immense white house on the top of a high bank just above the water.

Though my husband, when younger, made the occasional trip now and again to England with his parents, he was well accustomed to the ways of earning a living in these parts and loved it.

Rex and I, had made up our mind to build our new home of log, we both thought we would like a log bungalow, and furthermore we both felt it could be built on our limited income.

Luckily right from the start, things seemed to come our way. The first day we set out to look for some suitable material for the

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building, we came upon a party that had a large pile of the biggest and longest logs that we had seen in a long while. The logs had the bark peeled off, and were already for setting up. "You can have them cheap" Duffield the owner told us. "A big shot" he continued, "wanted a log bungalow built on Sunset Boulevard, but his wife passed away suddenly, and he changed his mind about building a summer home. You'll not find logs that big in these parts anymore", he finished. My husband readily accepted the offer and wrote out a cheque to him there and then covering the full amount. We were both beaming at each other with satisfaction at the thought that now we could go right ahead and build our new home.

We had our house built in a low bungalow style, with windows everywhere for the sunlight to come in. My brothers all helping with the putting up of it without any incumberance whatsoever on our part. And Ferade went so far as to help us design and build a huge cobble stone fire place, which just put

the finishing touch to a very lovely ranch home.

Many times since, seated as we often do on a midwinters' night, before a huge fire of birch and pine logs. I would look up to see the pale moon looking down at us through an intricate lace of pine branches. The world was so very, very lovely, and a deep sense of security would come over me.

It is so easy then, at times to begin meditating on the past. How fortunate I had been to meet this fine English husband of mine, and to find this quiet peace and happiness which at one time appeared so remote, so far away.

And I am left wondering how the hand of fate, brought Michael my Father, and Shafia my Mother into this magnificent country, where milk and honey flows even as plentiful as it did in the days of my Ancestral Fathers. In that land across the seas, where like the very pines before my door, stand the great tall cedars of Mount Lebanon.

CHAPTER VI

My father Michael, was from Beth el (house) Ateah. He was born in the Village of Moukhtara, Mount Lebanon, Syria, in the Middle-East, in the year 1862.

My mother Shafia, was from Beth el Malouf. She was born in the town of Zhali, which is also in Mount Lebanon, in the year 1879.

They were both from Arab descendants, like most of the inhabitants of Syria, and they were both Christians. I emphasize the fact that they were both Christians, because when speaking of individuals in that country, one stresses the point as to whether they are Christians or Mohammedans.

Both religions are prominent in the Middle-East, and both religions were usually at odds with one another, affecting almost to the point of insult, any one who did not recognize their respective religions.

Michael was a good six foot in his stocking feet, with well built broad shoulders, and lithe hips. He had medium brown wavy hair, a broad brow, and fine hazel eyes, which at a casual glance appeared green in color. He had semi-roman features, and he always wore a mustache.

Ever since I could remember, he was known by friends and acquaintances from the Red River Valley to Norway House, and as far north as Grand Rapids, as big Mike.

He was always held in fear and respect too, by everyone who knew him wherever he travelled along that picturesque span of water. Because Michael never would tolerate liars, or men who could not keep their word of honour.

Michael's father, Ameen of Beth el Ateah, was born in the year 1829. The Beth el Ateah's for generations were land owners in Moukhtara. Members of Beth el Ateah were always held in fear and respect in Lebanon, because of their integrity and high moral standards.

The Village of Moukhtara was noted for its olive groves and vineyards, and Beth el Ateah possessed both in abundance on their land, with olives being the bulk of their produce. There was also an orange grove and some fig trees on the estate, which produced large luscious fruit each year.

In Moukhtara, Beth el Ateah were considered wealthy middle class people. They owned beside the land, a grist-mill and a mill where the olives they produced were crushed and the oil extracted from them.

The grist-mill was used for crushing and grinding various grains for themselves and for the neighbors and inhabitants of the village and near by villages, who were accustomed to bring their produce to the mill, where they were charged a nominal fee for this service.

Ameen my grandfather's immediate family consisted of three sons and a daughter, Michael the eldest, Barbara, Butrus, and the youngest Abdullah.

The children all attended schools where

they had the privilege of studying both English and Arabic. These schools were built in Mount Lebanon, by English and American Missionaries, and both schools had a large attendance of pupils from Beth el Ateah.

My uncle Abdullah attended one of these schools, and made very good progress, graduating in both languages, and later holding the position as teacher of both English and Arabic in Lebanon.

Michael however, perhaps because of his adventurous and unsettled personality, graduated in Arabic alone. Barbara and Butrus I cannot remember very much about, Michael did not speak of them very often.

He told us however, that Barbara had married, against her parents wishes, a very wealthy Arab. The Beth el Ateah objected to the union, because of his family's extreme cautiousness in money matters. A most unforgivable vice, in that land where generosity is the very soul's essence.

From Michael I had gathered that Barbara and her husband, had both while yet quite

young, died of Cholera in Egypt, where they had been living. They left one son of whom we have never heard anything of to this day.

Butrus married a girl from the village of Moukhtara, and settled on the land of his fathers, with his young family. He passed away in the year 1913, and his widow Alexandra passed away in October 1947. I still correspond with members of his immediate family in Lebanon.

Michael and Abdullah, both came to America. Michael in the year 1897.

CHAPTER VII

Mount Lebanon for generations was noted in the Middle-East for its much envied independence and freedom, which the rest of Syria did not enjoy. To protect this liberty and self government, Lebanon kept a fine force of soldiers, Home Guards. The pick of the country to represent and protect this freedom.

This Army was a very colorful one, but its force of men where salary was concerned, were certainly far from being overpaid. They were well fed however, and had fine cavalry regiments of pure bred Arabian horses and camels.

These troops were all experts in handling both firearms and swords. They wore uniforms typical of the Middle-East, turbans included. And flowing sashes of multi-colored silk yarns.

Michael, when he reached the age of eighteen, persuaded Ameen to let him join

this colorful home defence army. And to this Ameen readily agreed. For well he knew the importance of a good military training for their young men.

Michael as an excellent horseman, was eagerly accepted as an Askar (soldier) which requirements he fulfilled in almost every detail.

There was plenty of excitement in the first few months of Michael's training in the Militia. But he gradually began to feel its inadequate payroll. The Beth el Ateah were accustomed to handling money freely, and Michael had never before really felt the stint of it. Then to top all this, on his first leave from the army, he took a trip to Cairo, Egypt to visit some friends and relatives who were spending the winter in the large Metropolis.

It was in Cairo that Michael met the beautiful Arab girl Laela, the daughter of a wealthy family of Sheiks, whose fairness was like the cream of a gazelle, and stood with contrasting loveliness, against her waving hair of jet. But it was her large true hazel

eyes, that held Michael spellbound, and gave her a glamour of surpassing beauty.

Disks of gold and jewels circled Laela's hair and brow, and on her slim white wrists, were bracelets of gold and silver, set with precious stones. Her diamond ear-rings, sparkled extravagantly at every graceful move she made.

Michael soon became very much infatuated with the beautiful Laela, and a romance sprung between them which was however, short lived. Because to marry the lovely Arab girl was an impossibility.

Laela's family were fanatic believers of the khoran, while Michael's family were equally firm believers of Christianity. A clash they both recognized, would be imminent and terrific, if either family had an inkling of the romance.

The army became more and more distasteful to Michael after meeting Laela, and he became restless, with too much idle time on his hands. He tried hard to forget the Arab girl, and longed to get away from it all.

Then one night, as he lay on his mat on the floor of the military hut where he was stationed, he threshed out the whole situation, and vowed he would never again attempt to see the lovely Laela.

A few months later, when Michael's two year term as an Askar expired, he did not sign up again, and decided he would like to travel and see the various parts of Syria. This he thought, would enable him to forget Laela, who was always on his mind, and who would always be to him a symbol of beautiful Arabian womanhood.

Ameen with his usual generosity, gave Michael several pounds to carry him on his journey through Syria. For Michael had expressed a desire to visit the Lake of Galilee, Jerusalem and Beyrouth, and many other towns and villages famous in Syria, including Bethlehem.

This Ameen would never dream of denying Michael.

The only means of travel in Syria in those days, were mostly by donkey, mule, camel

or steed. Michael with ingenuity purchased a little spirited Arabian mount, one similar to the Arabian horse he rode while in the Home Guard, and planned to travel horse-back.

When the day arrived for Michael to set out on his journey, he kissed Ameen and Sophia his parents, and reluctanly bade them farewell. Little knowing at the time, that he would never again, while living, see their kindly dear faces.

In those days one required a brave and stout heart, while travelling through that land, and a strong healthy body. Michael possessed both, plus a horse and a dagger, which he carried in his belt. They were a safeguard against robbers and highway-men, that roamed the countryside in large numbers.

With the money in his bosom, and the dagger in his belt, Michael mounted his horse and waved good-bye. He was enroute now, to the city of Beyrouth.

CHAPTER VIII

Late that evening found Michael in a small town, and the first thing he did was to look about for a place to put in the night. Accosting a pedestrian on one of the narrow streets, Michael asked him the way to the Inn. And the man not only directed the way, but politely led him to the street.

There Michael thanked him and made his way to the low flat architectural set up, built with bricks of clay and straw. A material widely used by the inhabitants, and which most of them made by themselves.

Michael leading his mount, was met at the door by a man who after having saluted him, proceeded to lead him to a small shelter directly behind the Inn, where Michael could leave his horse for the night, in the charge of a young lad.

Satisfied that the animal was comfortably taken care of, Michael returned to the Inn.

There he was welcomed into a large room, with low tables and stools everywhere.

Michael seated himself on one of the low stools at a table where presently a tiny cup of steaming black coffee was placed before him.

The whole atmosphere of the place seemingly glowed with a pleasant hospitality.

Soon he was talking and exchanging topics of the day with several other fellow travellers, who were also spending the night at the Inn.

Michael was enjoying himself immensely, "This", he thought after listening to several tales of interest, "was really going to be a life of real adventure."

A little later that evening, several steaming trays were ushered into the room, on which were placed large plates laden with cakes and squares of Kibee. This delicious dish, made up of minced lamb and finely ground wheat cereal and flavored as only an Easterner can, is a favorite dish of Arabs throughout the Middle-East.

The platters of Kibee were placed in the center of the tables surrounded by small, round flat loaves of bread. In the Arabian custom of the times, each man helped himself to a loaf of bread, upon which, he placed a square or cake of Kibee, and proceeded to eat their evening meal.

Taking a stroll through the town later that night, Michael stopped at one of the Cafia's for more black coffee, before retiring to the Inn.

That night he slept with the dagger placed underneath his pillow, ready to protect himself and purse, should the occasion arise.

Very early next morning, refreshed after a night's rest devoid of incidents, Michael drank a cup of steaming black coffee and prepared to continue his journey.

Before leaving, Michael walked up to a man whom he took to be the proprietor of the Inn and asked for his bill. He was extremely astonished to hear the rather indignant reply, No charge. "Travellers and strangers, were always welcome to the Inn's

free hospitality," the man explained, which were each day provided for exclusively and alternately, by families of that town.

However, Michael took a piece of silver from his pocket and gave it to the lad who provided his horse with feed and shelter, mounted the beast, and cantered up the dusty road to his next destination.

Michael soon found that he could cover the greater part of Syria, on very little funds. Because most of the villages and towns, like the town of his first travels had an Inn where free hospitality was extended to weary travellers. This usually consisted of coffee and one large meal, and a lodging place for the night, regardless of color, creed or circumstances.

At one of these Inns during his journey Michael met a young man Daib by name, which meant wolf in English, and literally he was a wolf. In proportion, Daib was about the same height and build as Michael, he was very handsome and like Michael had a striking personality, plus a good sense of humor.

Daib's happy go lucky disposition and care-free ways, has easily won for him friends, everywhere he went.

Michael liked Daib from the moment they met, when Daib had asked him for a cigarette. He soon found too, that Daib, as far as finances were concerned, was not quite as fortunate as he was.

About that time, Michael began to miss his comrades of the militia, and readily accepted Daib's idea of continuing their journey together.

Later during conversations with his new companion, Michael discovered that Daib was not a native of Lebanon, but from the part of Syria called Magduchy. Daib lacked too the education Michael had, and did not hesitate to let Michael know that he had congratulated himself, when he discovered that Michael was a native of Lebanon, whose family seemed to be well known everywhere they went, and who also was regarded with fine prestige.

Together Michael and Daib travelled for almost two months on their sight-seeing tour. Then one day Michael discovered that his purse was running low in silver. Daib's money had long since vanished, and for weeks he had been living on borrowings from Michael.

About that time there were rumors that had reached the Middle-East, of fabulous wealth in gold-fields discovered in the Canadian North. When Michael and Daib came to hear of it, their love of adventure soared to new heights. They decided there and then, to make a great effort to find work, save their money and go to North America.

In the City of Beyrouth, Michael because of his education and fine personality, found a position as coachman to an Orthodox Arch-Bishop.

Daib, after looking around for a time, managed to find himself an appropriate job as well.

With strict management, and economy on

the part of both men, they eventually saved enough money to cross the ocean. And in due time, they boarded a ship bound for New York and hence to Canada.

CHAPTER IX

It was in December 1898 that Michael arrived in the City of Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba, Canada.

In Winnipeg Michael planned to purchase several horses, and make his way with them enroute to the rich gold fields of the Klondike, there to seek his fortune in the new land.

While visiting one evening, some friends of Daib's, in that city, Michael met Shafia Malouf, then a young woman of eighteen.

Shafia Malouf had arrived in Canada, three years previously and had been residing in Ottawa with an Uncle and Aunt, until recently.

There was something about Shafia that attracted Michael from the start, and Michael, a gifted conversationalist soon struck up a conversation with her, while Shafia listened to him rapturously.

The two were delighted when they learned they were both natives of Mount Lebanon.

In fact, Michael informed Shafia, that in his travels through Syria, prior to coming to America, he had toured Zhali, Shafia's home town, for a few days.

While there Michael had heard of the large Malouf family, some of whom he had the pleasure to meet. He found too, that the Malouf's of Zhali, held the same prestige as did the Ateah's in Moukhtara and vicinity.

A romance soon followed that first meeting, which proved to be a record one, among their newly acquired Syrian friends and acquaintances.

For after a week's courtship, Michael and Shafia were married in a little church in Winnipeg.

The Middle-East custom of marriages, based on family prestige, was apparently still an accepted fact, even though the young couple met thousands of miles away from their native Mount Lebanon.

Shafia confided to friends later, that from

the moment she met Michael, she saw from the impression and attention he made on the people in his presence, that here was a man of superior intellect, and "of course", she added, "He was tall and handsome."

Michael found in Shafia a young woman who, while yet a stranger had something about her that warmly appealed to him. She was a young Arabian girl in a strange land and he wanted to love and protect her.

Although Michael and Shafia were the only natives of Lebanon, in Winnipeg at the time, Syrian friends and acquaintances, who were mostly from a town called Magduchy, in Syria, put on one of the largest wedding celebrations to be ever held among their nationality in that western city.

Michael and Shafia found in these Winnipeg friends a warm-hearted and genuine love toward their interest. Which, one day ended, with Michael giving in to their persuasions, and settling down with Shafia in their circle.

The Klondike expedition was called off

somewhat reluctantly, and Michael gave up the idea of looking for adventure and fortune in far off fields.

He learned enough from his short contact with these new people, that in the Province of Manitoba, lay everything a man's heart could desire. Adventure, wealth and millions of unexplored opportunities. Just waiting for someone who had the pluck and ambition to grasp them.

Almost a year went by. Michael and Shafia were very happy, although at first it was somewhat of a struggle to make ends meet.

Michael had never been accustomed to manual labor and found it difficult too, to acquire the English language very fluently, regretting he did not take more interest in it, when he had the opportunity at school in Lebanon.

He soon however, heard of the fur trade on Lake Winnipeg, and proceeded to make preparations to try his luck in that direction.

A year after they were married, a little

daughter was born to Shafia and Michael, of whom they were both very proud and happy.

The moment Michael laid his eyes on the child, he said, to Shafia and friends, who had gathered about the couple to congratulate them, "I would very much like to give our baby daughter the Arab name of Laela. Just Laela." To this Shafia readily agreed, adding that she too, liked the name.

Then turning to her friends, she said simply in Arabic, "Michael always has such good taste."

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CHAPTER X

With the Klondike expedition out of the question now, Michael's thoughts turned to closer fields to earn a living for his young family. Immigrants were coming into the Mid-Western city daily and in larger numbers all the while, and one day Michael met just the man he was looking for. This was Butrus, another native of Syria who had managed to reach Winnipeg. He too, came to the new land to seek his fortune.

Butrus was quite a colorful figure, and a real dare-devil. When he was fourteen years old he left his native Magduchy, for the life of a deep sea diver. He had lived for a short time in Tropoli, but most of his life, so far, he had lived on the Isle of Cyprus.

Butrus could swim and dive like a Canvas Back or Mallard, and was just the man to help Michael in his latest idea. And that was to trade with the Indians on Lake Winnipeg.

Michael soon found that Butrus was elated with the idea of sailing on the water once more. And together, he and Michael looked over a sailboat that lay for sale at a wharf on the Red River. A boat which Michael later bought. With the boat, he planned to make routine trading trips that spring and summer, to several points on Lake Winnipeg.

Later, Michael had the boat loaded down with dry goods and groceries of every description. Then, with Butrus and an Indian by the name of Joe, they started their journey down toward the mouth of the Red River.

Shafia with their infant daughter Laela, remained in Winnipeg. There they occupied modest quarters, in a large house of brick, on the banks of the Red River, which was owned by an Irish woman. Mrs. Finn was a gentle and very kindly person, who took a genuine interest in the young Immigrant mother and child. She taught Shafia in acquiring many of the Canadian ways as well as helping her to master the English language.

Michael's first stop on his trading expedi-

tion was at Selkirk, and at the St. Peter's Indian Reservation where an Indian treaty was going on in full swing.

Daib, Michael's close friend on previous adventures, had somehow heard of Michael's latest ventures, and lost no time in following him and caught up with the sailboat soon after it reached Selkirk. Daib told Michael that he was just as anxious as he was to see this new country and would like to travel along with them. To this Michael agreed.

Joe the Indian, was an excellent navigator, and did a good job of sailing the boat. At the same time guiding Butrus, and instructing him on the various courses as they sailed on to their destination.

Michael must have made fair progress on these trips, as he did this sort of travelling for several years to come. Each time going up and coming down the Lake, making short stops all along the long route, from the mouth of the Red River to Norway House on the Nelson River.

Michael's boat must have been a sturdy

one, for it had bucked many a storm, but always came through unharmed but for a few minor repairs.

Shafia had asked Michael on several occasions if she and the children might accompany them on one of these trips. For by this time another daughter was born to them, who was named Sophia, after her Grandmother's on both sides of the family. Michael promised that the following year, "Allah Willing", he would take them to the nearest Indian reservation where they could see an Indian Treaty in full regalia.

To Michael this was a promise, and he kept it.

When the following early summer arrived, he made preparations, with Daib and Butrus, together with his man Joe the Indian, to go to the treaty, which was to be held at the Reservation of St. Peter's not far from Selkirk.

Arrangements were made for Shafia and the two little girls to arrive there the following day by stage coach.

CHAPTER XI

Shafia's first visit to an Indian Treaty grounds, was a historical one as far as she and the little girls were concerned. It was the first time she had travelled any distance on a stage coach with the children. They were all dressed in their Sunday best for the occasion.

The coach was pretty well packed with passengers.

The horses were fine looking, high spirited animals, and the driver seemed to take considerable pride in driving them at an unusual high speed.

Shafia appeared quite anxious as the stage coach creaked and swayed from side to side, and not a few of the passengers appeared to have shared her anxiety as well.

Then in a split second it happened. And just as they had expected, the coach turned over. The driver was turning a corner, at

what must have been a terrific speed for a coach. There apparently were speed fiends in those days too.

The passengers violently shaken by the incident, picked themselves up from amid the wreck. And nursed their various injuries, which luckily were of not too serious a nature, at the same time voicing their resentment at the driver of the coach.

Shafia recovering instantly from the shock, looked about at once for her children and found to her surprise, Laela and Sophia, both submerged in what must have appeared to them the garden of Eden. For there were the two little girls sitting with strawberries to the right of them and strawberries to the left of them and strawberries all around them.

Shafia, when recalling this incident, said, "The little girls were cramming into their mouths, tiny fists of luscious berries, enjoying every moment of it, regardless of the moans and groans of the several passengers who were injured by that reckless driver!"

Quite relieved to find that the children

were none the worse after the incident, Shafia said she had often wondered since then who the unfortunate woman was who had lost all her strawberries. She hoped however, that the woman was aware of the fact that she had turned a very grim situation into a surprisingly happy one for two little girls.

Shafia waited at the scene of the accident for a couple of hours until another coach was brought to pick up the passengers and take them to their destinations.

When Shafia reached the treaty grounds with her little ones, she was met by Michael, who immediately escorted them to a huge tent, which resembled a small department store, once they were inside of it.

There were several tents all in a row on the grounds, and these displayed every kind of merchandise. The whole affair looked very much like a small town or village that had suddenly sprung up over night.

There were also the smaller tents of the Indians in the distance grouped together not unlike a tiny village.

It was quite a gala affair this Indian treaty, and the Indians there were really whooping it up. That evening there was a big pow-wow, the Indians displayed their colorful leather and bead garments, while many colored feathers circled their heads. Round and round they danced, to the beating of the tom-toms.

Laela and Sophia were rather afraid of the whole affair, and clung close to Shafia, while she explained to them, as well as she could, what the whole thing was about.

Suddenly Daib, full of the devil as usual, grabbed a huge red polka dot handkerchief, from his pocket, and waving it high over his head, stepped into the center of the circle of Indians who had gathered around, and began pirouetting about with one hand on his hip, in great Arabian style.

The crowd laughed and seemed to enjoy every bit of Daib's ballet dancing, until accidentally the dancer stepped on the toes of a small Indian lad, who had drawn a little too close to the dancer. For Daib, with head

held high, was lost in the dance of his favorite Magduchy.

The boy let out an unearthly howl of pain when the incident occurred, and in the next few moments it looked as if there would be a free for all fight from the enraged Indians. However, Michael stepped in, and after a bit, things quietened down, and the pow-wow was again resumed. This time though, without the interference from the big white man Wolf.

The stage coach accident always remained with Shafia, who never seemed to recover from the happy incident of finding her two small daughters, enjoying a strawberry a-la-mode, instead of nursing a broken limb or two, in what might have easily been a tragic occasion.

After the Indian treaty at Selkirk and St. Peter's reservation, Michael reloaded the sailboat, this time at the Selkirk harbour, and sailed with his crew to Norway House.

There Michael traded and sold for whatever the Indians had to offer. Bringing back

to Shafia, beautiful elaborately beaded pieces of Indian art.

Later on that summer, Michael brought back from these trips to the north, hundreds of baskets of blueberries, which he sold in Winnipeg, to wholesalers.

Shafia always preserved several jars of this wonderful wholesome fruit for the family. The berries no doubt, reminding them of the luscious grapes, that they used to store and make into raisins and fine wines, in their native Lebanon.

CHAPTER XII

I stood on the lovely green slope of the bank, at the mouth of the Winnipeg River. It was an early morning in June. And the green banks were covered with a soft dew. In the dead stillness of the morning I could hear the low rumbling of the waters of Silver Falls in the long distance.

For the first time in my young life I became completely impressed with the natural beauties around me. Everything about me, seemed to hold me spellbound with its enchanting loveliness.

The mouth of the Winnipeg River, at this point, from where I was standing, took a sudden natural curve inland, making a small harbour, where Michael, my father, had his sailboat anchored.

It had been raining the day before, and the sails were hoisted up that evening, so that

they would dry out. On the calm deep waters of the river, where the famous LaVerendrye paddled his canoe, it was a pretty sight to behold at that moment.

We had just arrived at Fort Alexander a few days before, and were just getting nicely settled in our new home. Though the home was new to us, in reality, it was a large two storey log building, with quite an ancient look. And the only new thing about it was its newly plastered and white-washed condition.

Michael as usual loved Lake Winnipeg, and never seemed to tire of looking for a new place, where he could earn in a couple of years, enough to purchase a permanent home for us, in some natural spot along this vast body of water.

Michael's intention at that time, was to stay for a couple of years on the Reserve and trade with the Indians. While his children were yet quite young.

Everything came to the Fort by Steam-boat then, and it was on the steam-boat, "The

Rocket" that the large Ateah family came there. "The Rocket" was a little fish freighter that was doing a magnificent job, sailing up and down the lake, at that time. And her Captains were always well known figures to all; in that part of the country.

From Fort Alexander, Michael could reach many points on Lake Winnipeg with his sail-boat, where he traded for fur, wood, fish and blue-berries. Occasionally he would buy some low bush cranberries, or mossberries, as they were sometimes called by the Indians.

Shafia was far from enthusiastic about living on the reserve, where we were total strangers, but nevertheless, made up her mind to settle down and make the best of the situation. She knew by this time any attempt to change Michael's mind would be futile, and she took it with good grace.

Ferade and myself, as the eldest girl and boy of the Ateah family, had the responsi-bility of assisting Shafia when Michael was away on one of his trading expeditions.

What a wonderful experience it was too.

The Indians would pull into the small pier which Michael had built just below the ice-house, on the banks of the river, with their boat load of Lake Winnipeg sturgeon.

We had never seen sturgeon before, and these were a sight worth seeing, really huge ones. Ferade and I would weigh them, and a hundred and fifty pound sturgeon then, would be a common sight.

The Indians would also bring in pounds and pounds of sturgeon caviaire, in wooden lard or jam pails. The pails would be placed in our cellar at home, where it was good and cool. There was never any difficulty in getting any of the children to go down that cellar for vegetables.

For automatically, with the vegetable basket, went a saucer and teaspoon to scoop a few mouthfulls of that delectable delicacy. The caviaire from Lake Winnipeg Sturgeon, is rarely seen now, except perhaps in very large expensive hotels.

The little pier, with the lovely water lillies, floating on either side of it, always held so

much attraction for the children. Then too, twice a week; The Rocket, would pull in, and unload its many cases of provisions, including huge barrels of apples, and many bags of flour.

We children attended daily the Government residential school for Indian children, which is beautifully situated further up the river, and about one mile below the stone fort, built by the explorer LaVerendrye. The school was conducted by Roman Catholic priests and nuns.

Farther up the river and just below what is now the picturesque town of Pine Falls, lay the English Church Mission, this was about a distance of three miles from the mouth of the Winnipeg River, and from where we lived.

We found it rather lonely living on the reserve, and away from all our old friends. The only other white family living there at that time was a Jewish storekeeper, who had a wife and three children, Moses, Rebecca, and Rachel.

The two girls attended the Indian residential school with us. While attending school there, I learned of a place called Purgatory, to which one might go after passing this life on earth.

Later, I had often thought that poor Rebecca and Rachel must have had their Purgatory right on this earth while attending that school. For never a day passed that the two little Jewish girls were not bombarded with questions on christianity by the Indian pupils whenever the nuns were out of hearing.

Rebecca and Rachel, always tried their best to avoid them, and kept quite close to us all the time, for fear the Indian children would pounce on them, as they had threatened to do several times.

CHAPTER XIII

One day, Michael came back from a trip to West Selkirk, with two beautfiul grey hounds. They were the finest pair of animals we had ever seen in our young lives.

Right there and then, with the assistance of Michael and Shafia, we named them Amir, and Amira, which meant Sir and Lady in Arabic. We were all very delighted with this pleasant surprise. The Indians on the reserve went wild when they saw the dogs, as indeed they were aristocrats of their kind, and they looked like young hinds.

The hounds were just three months old at the time they arrived, but were really tall long legged animals for their age. Their lithe graceful bodies and long necks held their well formed heads as erect as statues.

Indians, far and near, came to get a glimpse of them, and were generous and enthusisatic

in their praise of the hounds. Several outstanding Indian trappers, who felt they could afford to purchase them, never seemed to tire of asking Michael if he would sell them the pair.

One day a trapper, noted on the reserve and all along the East shore of the lake, made an offer for the hounds, an offer that was really difficult for a trader to turn down. After asking Michael if he would sell him the pair at a certain price, and had the offer rejected. Appeared so intent on possessing the dogs, that he left the store, went out to where his carriall lay hitched to a team of huskies and brought in a bundle of furs.

Then the Indian, proceeded to lay out on the floor, pelt after pelt, of beaver, otter, fisher and mink.

It happened on a Saturday, for the children were all home that day and were very much interested in the whole proceedings, especially when it involved our pets.

We knew by this time the value of these pelts, and felt sick at heart, for we loved our

dogs, and could not understand why these men wanted them so much. Would they never get it into their heads that these animals were just not for sale, but for us to romp about with.

Just then Shafia entered the store, took one look at the heap of pelts, and gasped. "The Indian is offering all these furs for Amir and Amira", Ferade whispered to her. Shafia stood and did not utter a word, she was intently watching Michael, and for a moment we were afraid that she might weaken.

Later, Shafia told us that it was very difficult to turn down an offer like that, which at a glance told her that it was four to five times the original price paid for the hounds.

However, our happiness with Amir and Amira was short lived. Because later on in the spring of that year, both hounds contracted distemper, and died. Some of the Indians tried to tell us they were poisoned by someone, but we doubted that story. We have never since owned such beautiful animals.

Two incidents stand out in my memory of our life on that Indian reserve on the Winnipeg River. One was the birth of my sister Pansy. She was named after Mrs Finn, the Irish woman's daughter, in whose home Shafia spent many happy days.

The other, was when Ferade and I decided one Sunday afternoon, when Shafia was away, and Michael was taking an afternoon nap, to get in one of the many Indian skiffs that lay on the edge of the river. We had never rowed a boat very much before, only occasionally, and that was when someone older that knew something about a boat was with us.

However, this time Ferade settled himself on the seat in the center of the boat while I sat on the back seat. As we pulled away and began rowing out, one of the oars slipped out of Ferade's small hand and into the water. It was futile to try and retrieve it. All he could do was to keep rowing with the one oar, which did not get us anywhere

but round and round in a circle. While we kept drifting farther and farther out with the current.

Luckily for us, some Indian lads happened to come by, and heard our shouts and cries for help. And with another boat, came out and rescued us.

Every year during the summer months of July and August, the Indians of the reserve picked up their tents, and moved like a band of Gypsies, in their skiffs to Big Elk Island. There they gathered blue-berries which grew in profusion.

Michael then, with his family and three tents, would settle in the sail-boat, and make his way to Big Elk Island too. One of the large tents was used for a trading post, the other two for living quarters.

I would like to say here, that if the Indians rowed to Big Elk Island like Gypsies, the Ateah's sailed like Arab Nomads of the desert, and we all loved it.

It was wonderful camping on that Island. We had a cookstove along with us, but some-

times when we ran out of bread, we would all coax Shafia to bake us a bannock before an open fire, just as the Indians did. Nothing ever tasted quite so good as that golden brown circle of baking powder bread, while we camped on that lovely Island.

CHAPTER XIV

Early one Sunday late in June we saw the white sail of a row-boat in the distance. It was a bright sunny morning, and the water lay clear as crystal, in the inland curve of the river.

Soon we were all on the bank, with our bare-feet snuggled deep in the green grass that grew so lush there at that season of the year. Here and there robins hopped in a nearby field, to be followed later by the scampering feet of little chipmunks who like us were feeling the exhilarating loveliness of everything about us.

It was far too late in the morning to hear the rumbling waters of Silver Falls. One had to be out at least by six in the morning to hear that.

I wondered then if it were on just such a day as this that the famous explorer La

Verendrye, navigated the Winnipeg River with his canoe. If it were, I felt sure that morning that he was well rewarded by just being alive to enjoy that evergreen country. with this river running in the midst of it.

The white sail of the row boat was coming closer and closer, and soon we could see the small white boat itself in the distance, gleaming in the morning sun. We shaded our eyes with our hands and waited expectantly, as only curious youngsters can.

Soon the Roman Catholic Mission bells were ringing, calling the Inhabitants of the Reserve to Sunday Mass.

As the boat approached the banks, we were joined by a group of our neighbors, including Mary Jane, who was all dressed up in a gay deep lilac colored blouse of silk crepe, trimmed with white lace, which she had bought from the Ateah Trading Store, and a dark wool skirt that went with it.

Mary Jane lived next door to us, in fact it was in the house owned by her father Joe, that we lived in.

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Mary Jane was quite an attractive young woman, with good features and sparkling dark eyes. She looked more French than Indian, and appeared to have lots of good common sense.

Every Sunday morning, Mary Jane and her parents went to mass. And we wondered why they were not on their way before this. But soon we found out the reason. The small boat with the white sail had now reached the river bank, and out stepped a youngish looking man, with freckles and bright red hair, brushed smoothly back from his brow.

By this time Mary Jane, all smiles, was talking rapidly to her parents in Indian. We surmized that they were discussing their journey to the church, for no sooner had the boat landed then they moved toward it and joined their red-headed guest.

Hurriedly they adjusted themselves on the seats of the boat and soon were pulling away in the direction of the Mission.

After watching the boat until it was almost out of sight, we all marched back into the

house, still wondering who the red-haired stranger was, who put his arms so lovingly about Mary Jane's waist, as he escorted her and made her comfortable on a seat in his row boat.

We were not surprised when later on the white boat returned once more with its occupants.

Shafia had cautioned us not to appear too curious, but inwardly we had the feeling that Shafia wondered too, if the young man was Mary Jane's latest beau, and where did he come from. A red head on the Winnipeg River Reserve at that time, was as unusual and almost as scarce, as a red headed wood pecker was in civilization, therefore no wonder we were all curious.

Later we asked Michael, for he seemed to know so much about the people there. Michael had travelled in that country long before we ever came to it. He seemed to know a little about everyone.

Mary Jane's new beau, Michael informed us, was of Scottish descent and a widower,

with four young children. His name was William.

William's father was manager of a Trading Post on the Reserve years ago. There were seven children in the family, two sons and five daughters. When the children were yet quite young, misfortune came upon him, and his wife died.

At that time, the best thing the Scotsman could do was to place the children in the Indian Residential school.

We knew of two young white girls who were boarding at the Residential school at that time. One was blonde, the other a red-head. They were very attractive girls too. However, we were too young then to pay particular attention to the fact, that this was rather unusual.

After Michael's information, we learned that the red haired young man and the two white girls at the Mission, were brother and sisters. Years later I learned that the red haired girl became a nun, and the blonde one died while yet a very young woman. But

at that time, after hearing Michael's story, we felt nothing but sympathy for the unfortunate children who lost their mother so early in life.

Late that summer, William and Mary Jane were married at the Roman Catholic Mission, and Mary Jane took over her duties of looking after four motherless children, in their home farther up that historic Winnipeg River.

We saw them all now and again, when Mary Jane would come to the mouth of the River to visit her parents. This was usually on a Sunday, and we would look forward to their visit and play with her newly acquired family.

CHAPTER XV

Michael bought up practically all the blueberries the Indians picked on Big Elk Island. Then he would sail with the cargo to the mouth of the Red River, and right into the City of Winnipeg. There he would dispose of them and return with a load of groceries and drygoods. This he did until it was time for us to return to our home on the Winnipeg River.

Sailing to and fro from Big Elk Island to the Fort, we often wondered what it was like on the Peninsula, or Little Elk Island, which lay between Big Elk Island and the Fort.

A few young people, whose parents were the first pioneers of Little Elk Island, would sail over to us on the big Island in a large fishing boat, and pay us a visit.

They were always very welcome guests, especially the two young ladies in their teens.

They had long golden hair, which hung down their backs in two long braids, and large dark blue eyes. In their bare feet they looked to us like lovely woodland nymphs, just out of fairy-land. Especially since they came from such an uninhabitated place like the Peninsula, where the dense forests of tall pine and birch and jutting points of rock and white sand, made everything look so undescribably natural and wild.

One day, while we still lived at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, we had a visitor. A young Syrian by the name of Khalel. Khalel had opened a small trading store at Little Black River, on the East shore of Lake Winnipeg, and had heard of Michael. Being of the same Nationality he decided he would pay us a visit. Michael and Shafia were delighted to have someone with whom they could converse in their Arabic language, and proceeded to make Khalel comfortable, as our guest. Shafia cooked that delectable Arabian dish Kibee, for him and seasoned it to perfection.

To make Arabian Kibee was quite an art in our family. Every summer Shafia, as did her mother, grandmother, and so on for generations, would buy a couple of bushels of wheat, which she would make into Burgol. To make burgol, Shafia would take the wheat, it could be either hard or soft wheat, and wash it several times in cold water, then drain well. After draining, she would place a large amount at a time in a large kettle or boiler, cover it over with either cold or warm water, place the lid on the kettle. Then let it simmer until it was soft, making sure not to over cook it.

After taking the wheat off the fire she would let it cool, and while it was cooling Shafia would spread several white sheets of cotton or cheese-cloth, on a flat surface. Preferably on a flat roof where the hot sun could beat on it. In Lebanon or Syria, where most of the buildings had flat roofs, it was an ideal place.

However, Shafia usually managed to find some sort of a substitute even if she had to

lay the sheets on the green grass of the lawn. On these sheets she would spread the wheat in a thin layer, and leave it to dry in the bright sunshine. Now and then Shafia would go and gently roll the wheat over with her hands, until at length it would be as dry and almost as hard as rock. This rock-like cereal would then be put through a grinder, not unlike a coffee grinder, and then stored away in white cotton bags.

When Shafia wanted to make Arabian Kibee, she took a pint of burgol and soaked it in a bowl of luke warm water for about ten minutes, then let it drain. After it was drained, she would add two pounds of minced lamb or beef, preferably lamb, in which was minced a large onion as well. Then she would proceed to blend it well together, adding salt, pepper and cinnamon to taste.

In a large flat shallow baking pan, Shafia would spread the well blended mixture, making the first layer about a half inch thick, patting smoothly and evenly. In the meantime, a filling of minced lamb and onion

nicely browned and flavored, was spread over the mixture. Then another layer, or the remainder of the blended burgol and meat, was gently patted over the whole pan. With a table knife which had been dipped in cold water, the Kibee was cut into small squares of about two inches and placed in a hot oven until it was nicely browned.

Kibee was the favorite of all Arabian dishes to Michael, and therefore was a common one in our household.

In the course of Khalel's conversations with Michael during that week-end visit, we learned that there were a few quarter sections of land that could be taken over as homesteads, on the Peninsula, Khalel got the information from paying a visit to the Island, where he was desperately in love with one of the blonde sisters we had met that summer at Big Elk Island.

Before taking his leave Khalel intimated to Michael, that he intended to take up a homestead on the Peninsula and that there was another quarter section of land that

would be an ideal spot for the Ateah family. Michael had been on the Peninsula a few times before, and was left quite impressed with its heavy forests of spruce, pine and birch . Although he had never been through the part that Khalel had described to him.

Khalel made it known there and then, that the quarter section of land he was after, lay alongside of the homestead which belonged to the lovely blonde's father.

Michael was never one who would rush at anything he undertook to do. But this time it was somehow different. He made an appointment that very moment, to meet Khalel later that week on the Peninsula, and they would together look the situation over.

From there, they would decide, and sail right through to the Red River and on to Winnipeg, and there file for the homesteads.

CHAPTER XVI

A light gale was blowing over Lake Winnipeg that late October day, when Michael left the sheltered harbour near the mouth of the River. The sky was clear and bright, typical autumn weather.

The two Indian sailors that were employed by Michael, were rather wary about travelling any distance on the lake that late in the season. But with some explaining and coaxing, they had at length yielded.

But, just as the Indian sailors had surmized, the weather lasted only a short time. And when Michael returned after that journey he told Shafia, that it was one of the most miserable trips he had encountered in a long, long time.

Michael concluded however, that it was well worth the trip, for he had a feeling, he confided to Shafia, that filing for that homestead was the opportunity of a lifetime.

The bush alone, on that farm was the finest and most dense on the Peninsula. And he finished by informing us, that he hoped to have us all settled there by the following early spring.

Shafia was very happy about it all, "It will be nice," she said, "To be able to live on a piece of land we could call our very own."

The family was growing larger all the time and Shafia was getting quite tired of picking up her brood and moving about from place to place.

This time Michael assured her that they would be moving for the last time. For he had at last, found the ideal spot of their heart.

The pine on that Island or Peninsula, he explained to Shafia, were like the cedars of Lebanon the blue-berries were so plentious there, and bore fruit like her grandfather's vineyards in Zhali.

All that winter Michael and Shafia were making plans for our new home. It so happened, that our Indian neighbor Joe, who was an aristocrat among the natives of the

reserve, had a son-in-law who was an accomplished carpenter. He had come to live that winter with his father-in-law on the reserve.

The carpenter, whose name was Joseph, was a frenchman from Lac du Bonnet and Joe's daughter was his third wife. He had a young family of five children, by this latest marriage. They were fine healthy good-looking youngsters, and we were delighted to have them as neighbors.

Michael lost no time in giving the Frenchman the contract to build a log home, with the understanding that he was to cut the logs for the building of the homestead.

Early in March, the Carpenter and his men set out to do the job, and in due time, had a fine large log home built on the Ateah Homestead, on Little Elk Island.

When the ice left Lake Winnipeg that early May, we prepared to move into our new home.

Khalel too, had filed for the homestead he wanted and proceeded to build a fine log

home for himself also. Where he could court the lovely blonde at his leisure, without having to cross that wide span of water as he previously had to.

Shafia was overjoyed at the prospect of leaving the reserve, for life for us there had taken a serious turn financially.

Michael's generosity typical of his race as an Middle Easterner, began to prove that he was not the person for that sort of business. Hard-luck stories of the Indians which were mounting daily, had all but broke Michael. He gave out far too much credit, and their chances for paying up, were getting extremely slimmer, day by day.

Michael and Shafia were getting out of the reserve just in time. Their financial position was now much less secure, than it had been when they first arrived at the reserve.

The children were no less excited by the prospect of leaving too. We were all getting just about as adventurous as Michael was by this time. And every far away field had that lovely green look in our estimation.

How nice we thought it would be, just to know what those high hills looked like at a closer range. How often we had gazed at them with longing eyes, as we sailed through Traverse Bay, on our way to and from Elk Island.

We had heard stories too, from the Indians, of the many wild game in that country, moose, deer, grouse and ducks, wild fowl of every description galore. In our young minds, it was next door to paradise.

By this time, Ferade and I were excellent shots. We felt that if all these stories were true, there would be plenty of provision in the family pantry at all times.

CHAPTER XVII

At long last the day came when we were to move away to our new home, Michael began to load the sail boat and several Indian skiffs at dawn. The owners of the skiffs were racing to and fro, carrying no end of boxes, bales, tubs and articles of every description.

John Baptiste was there too, a short slight fellow with greying hair. I shall never forget John Baptiste, he was so much more a Frenchman than an Indian. His skin was fair and he had deep set blue eyes, that always sparkled and danced whenever he addressed you.

Many times on a winters night, we children would sit comfortably around John Baptiste in the store, while he hugged the big wood heater and told us hair-raising stories of how he met old Windigo on the frozen lake or river, on a moon-light night, or in a sweeping Blizzard.

Until it reached the stage when Michael and Shafia decided we had heard enough of the weird tales, and would send us to bed. After that we were all sent out of the store whenever John Baptiste poked his head in the doorway.

Nevertheless, John Baptiste was always so serious about it all that I have often wondered since then, if it were really his imagination that had built up those weird incidents.

Early that afternoon, a fair wind and a clear sky made it possible for us to make our journey northward. The big boat, with its wide white sails tacking in the breeze, led the way.

Following along the shoreline were a half dozen skiffs, each with a sail of its own making. Which consisted of white flour bags, or a grey woolen blanket.

For some reason or another, perhaps because the sail boat was too heavily laden with our belongings, Shafia and the children

travelled in one of the larger skiffs owned by Michael. This was managed by an Indian, who was well adept in handling a boat of that sort.

Travel was much slower by skiff, but it was also much more fun. We kept quite close to the lovely white sand beach of the shore-line which seemed to lay all the way from the mouth of the river.

When at last we reached Cat-fish Creek, all the skiffs pulled toward the shore, to land for a cup of tea, a custom very much adhered to whenever the Indians travelled along the lake.

Once landed, it seemed that in no time or effort the Indians had a good fire going between a few large rocks. Over it they hung a ten pound tin syrup pail of water.

Shafia had brought along our old camp tea kettle, and after one of the children had filled it with lake water, hung it alongside the syrup pail.

It was all so much fun for the children, we

took the occasion to scamper about having the time of our young lives, exploring what lay in the nearby woods beyond the shore.

After a cup of tea and a bite to eat, we were all on our way once more. About five o'clock that afternoon we landed at what we always called from that day on, Our Shore.

The bay was calm and resembled blue glass, the sail boat lay anchored a short way out from the shore. It had reached its destination long before we did. Michael and his men had it unloaded and all its contents carried into our new home.

The moment we set foot on that lovely strip of smooth white sand, we loved it.

Everything about seemed so untouched, so delicately etheral. The tall spruce and pine, their branches reaching out into the skies, sent a soft fragrance, which prevailed everywhere.

The slight Manitoba maples, intermingled with huge clumps of silvery birch. Further up the narrow trail which led to our new home, the balsams were so dense, that their

needles under our feet, sprung like a Persian carpet.

Huge cushions of velvet green moss, with the deep pure and undefiled scent of the woods clinging to them, made us feel like snuggling close and falling asleep. For we were all very weary by this time.

Soon we reached the small clearing and were at the door of our new log home.

How excited we were the eight of us, children of all ages, with Shafia in the lead, as we marched through the door. In her hand Shafia carried a bottle of holy water. She had asked the priest at the Indian Catholic Mission for it, and in her Greek Orthodox way, sprinkled it about the house. With a short fervent prayer she asked God to bless our new home.

Michael had the old cast iron cook stove up by now, with a good fire in it. Soon the kettle was boiling and we all sat down to a rather late evening meal, tired but very happy.

The Indians that came along with us,

pitched their tents and settled down for the night, along the shore of the bay, before their bright camp fires.

Our new home was a fairly large, two storey building, with the ground floor left in one large room, because Michael never approved of cramped quarters for the children. He always maintained that growing children, should have plenty of space to move about in.

It was then and there, that the large Ateah family, settled down to a real life of pioneering on the Peninsula. Their down to earth method of earning a living, would seem quite an ordeal, and burdensome, to most people, but was one of real pleasure and happiness to all of us.

CHAPTER XVIII

In a conspicuous place, on the roughly hewn log walls of our new home, Michael hung a portrait. It was the picture of a handsome young man, with fine dark eyes, and a black military mustache. On his head he wore a red turban (tarboosh in Arabic) with a gold tassel, the tarboosh also was embroidered in gold.

Across the breast of the uniform he wore, hung several impressive Eastern stars, and military medals.

This was the portrait of Shaheen Bey George, a first cousin of Michael's who was at that time secretary of the British War Office at Khartoum, in the Soudan. The medals Shaheen wore were conferred on him by practically every nation in the world.

Ever since I remember, Shaheen's portrait always held a prominent place on the wall of our home, wherever we lived.

When at one time we lived on the West side of Lake Winnipeg, a fire destroyed practically all our belongings, which included Michael's and Shafia's gold watches, very valuable items to them, and jewellery they possessed since their wedding day. But by some magic ingenuity, Shaheen Bey George's portrait survived the ordeal.

Michael was very proud of Shaheen, who really made a success of his life, and rose to the position of esteem he now held in the British War Office.

Unlike Michael, Shaheen, seized the golden opportunity the English and American Missionary schools offered him and studied both English and Arabic. And from the inconspicuous position of interpreter he rose to that of secretary. Wherever Shaheen went in the Middle-East, he had an imposing group of Officers and guards about him.

That Shaheen Bey George was a fine man with a terrific personality combined with great humility, I gathered from the letters he wrote to me.

Michael, proud of the fact that I, his eldest daughter, was fairly well educated in English, apparently wrote to Shaheen, and told him so.

Shaheen was very much interested in Michael's family, for though he himself had been married several years, his wife was barren. Only folks, who can understand what that means to the people of that part of the world, could realize what a tragedy this was.

Therefore, Shaheen Bey George, secretary of the British War Office in the Soudan, under Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, took time off during the first great world war to sit down, and in his own beautiful hand writing, wrote a fair sized narrative to a little girl back on a small lonely Peninsula in Canada. A bit of land surrounded almost by the waters of a great Canadian lake. These letters are now one of my most prized possessions.

In 1936, Shaheen Bey George went into retirement. He retired in Cairo, Egypt, where

a number of professional people of the Ateah family lived.

Early in 1937, Shaheen sent Michael another photograph of himself. It was a portrait of a much more mature person. He had grown heavier and fine lines were etched on his brow. He wore several new medals on his breast, which had not been there before.

Michael sent for me as soon as he received the portrait, and asked me to read the few lines of English that accompanied the letter he had received in Arabic with the photograph.

I was very much impressed with the stiff piece of cardboard that helped to keep the photograph from getting damaged in the mail. For the cardboard itself turned out to be an Arabic calendar, the first Arabic calendar I had ever seen. I was also surprised to see so many English phrases on the calendar as well.

Michael's face lit up as he scrutinized the portrait, and he remarked that Shaheen was looking exceptionally well. "Now he can take

life easy and visit Moukhtara, as long as he pleases," he finished. How nice it would be, I thought a little sadly, if only Michael could visit Moukhtara for a short time too.

Before I left for home, Michael handed me Shaheen's portrait and said simply, "Here Laela, take this home with you and keep it."

In May 1938, I received a black edged letter from Cairo, Egypt, and on opening it found that it was a letter from a Doctor Ateah. The letter informed me that my Uncle Shaheen had quietly passed away in Cairo after a brief illness. Everything possible had been done to save his life.

Shaheen's wife had asked this relative to write and inform me, because she was too overcome with shock and grief to do so herself.

CHAPTER XIX

Michael had been drilled almost from infancy to live fearlessly and carried the idea with him practically all his life. He never seemed to tolerate fear of any description. When the children at any time showed signs of fear, he would immediately put us to shame with the words, "How can anyone who believes in Allah, be a coward? Run along and don't be afraid." He would continue, "Live like a lion."

There was only one time in his life, Michael confessed, that he really felt the grip of fear. This, he said, happened when he was just a young lad of seventeen, and it was under rather trying circumstances.

It happened in Moukhtara, Lebanon, one very bright moon-lit night. It was on one of those nights, when the moon shone so bright that it gave one almost the impression of daylight. The air about was very calm and

still, and the trees in the olive grove were mute silhouettes against the sky.

Michael was on his way to do night duty at his father's grist-mill, which was situated a good distance from their home.

The road to the grist-mill led through the olive grove that grew on the slope of a steep hill. As he ascended the slope, he heard a sharp piercing cry. It echoed and re-echoed through the hills and the valley below.

Michael was stunned for a moment, but instantly recognized that it was not the cry of a jackal, though they wandered about in numerous numbers there, and he had heard them many times before.

This cry was unusual. It sounded weird and eerie like. Michael said he could feel his hair stand on end, a most strange and sensational feeling, which lifted the tarboosh (turban) on his head.

To make matters more weird and complicated, the same voice began to cry out his name, in a most frantic manner.

Baffled beyond description, he listened in-

tently for a moment, his heart pounding fiercely against his ribs. Again it came, "Michael, Michael." This time Michael recognized it as a feminine voice.

The voice came from the direction of a stream at the foot of the hill. Down the slope Michael hurried, and in his anxiety, the grip of fear that had previously taken hold of him disappeared.

All he could remember now was that someone was in distress, and was seeking his aid.

A few minutes later, gasping for breath from exertion, he found himself at the bottom of the hill, eager to go to the rescue.

Before him lay the stream, and when only a few feet away, Michael heard the splashing of water. And again the pathetic and heart-rending cry, echoing his name through the stillness of the night.

In a daze, thoughts swarmed through his head. Who could the woman be that was calling his name through the hills at this unearthly hour, and with such hysterical cries?

Michael soon found, however, that he had

no time to lose. Before him in the stream, struggling and splashing in the water, was a woman.

A good swimmer, it only took Michael a matter of a few seconds, before he dived into the waters, and was rapidly stroking his way toward the struggling creature.

After some difficulty, Michael managed to bring her to land, and to his astonishment, he found that he had never met the woman before.

In the light of the moon, Michael saw that the woman was young and slight. Through her tears, her large dark eyes shone like the eyes of a frightened gazelle.

Her dark hair, with water dripping from it, hung in two long braids down her back, and she was sobbing hysterically.

Michael was at a loss for a moment, for this was a most unusual situation for a young man. And it was getting more difficult and complicated all the time.

Finally Michael came to the conclusion that this creature, whoever she was, was in trouble

and had called upon him. She must have heard of him or perhaps of his family at sometime or another.

Michael led the girl to a large flat rock where she seated herself. Then untying the long colorful silk sash that he had about his girth, he took off his white cotton top cloak and wrapped it gently about the girl.

Eventually, she stopped sobbing, and Michael got his first opportunity to ask her who she was, and how she happened to be in such a predicament.

The young woman gazed up at him pathetically, thanking Michael in a profusion of words and compliments, characteristic of most Eastern people. Then she told him her story.

"I am a Druse woman," she began, "And when I was very young, I married a man of my own nationality, though he was several years older than myself. One whom I love with all my heart. We live" she continued, "up in the mountains, on the outskirts of the village.

"My husband, though proud of me, is also very jealous. He continually torments me, with unfounded stories, and suspicions of my unfaithfulness to him.

"It grew to a state where I found it so unbearable that I decided to end it all by throwing myself into the stream.

"Early this evening," she continued, "we had a quarrel, and he slapped me unmercifully, wishing at the same time that a plague would destroy by beauty. That slap settled it.

"Later this evening he had to leave home on an errand. Heart-broken by his unjust treatment, I ran blindly down the mountain, and dashed headlong into the stream.

"I never realized what a foolish thing I had done, until I hit the water. Then the thought struck me, who would look after my son, my baby Najeb. What would he do without his mother?

"The thought instantly became unbearable, and I started to shout. I knew Beth el Ateah had a mill somewhere in the vicinity, for now

and then, my husband had taken olives there to be pressed, and wheat made into burgol.

"I knew too, that they had a son whose name was Michael, and that he looked after the mill most of the time. So please forgive me Effendi (Sir), I had just gone mad for awhile.

"Beth el Ateah, although they are Christians", the woman continued, "they never hated us as most Christians did for being Druse, who believed in God alone, and worshipped from the Koran.

"The Beth el Ateah were always ready to help strangers, regardless of their customs or beliefs. That is why I did not hesitate to call you, Michael, to my assistance."

After Michael had listened to her dramatic story he was filled with a mixed feeling of sympathy for the girl, and a keen dislike for her cowardly husband.

"Come, I will escort you home," Michael said to her, "and I shall have a talk with your husband. He shall treat you different than he has been doing. If he will not mend his

ways I will have all the Beth el Ateah after him. He shall change his ways toward you or bear the consequences."

Wet and shivering, Michael led the girl up the side of the hill toward her home. She appeared so young and pathetic by his side.

Michael had some difficulty in controlling his temper. It seemed to rise with every step he took, until he felt that if he were not careful, he would beat up her husband the moment he caught sight of him.

Half way up the slope, he could hear a male voice calling loudly, "Najlia, Najlia." Michael thought, "What a hateful voice, it sounded so wild and barbaric."

The slight figure of the girl by his side, stood tense instantly. "Let me run and hide," she begged, "I am afraid of him."

Then in the silence that followed, came the wail of an infant.

"Michael, Michael, my babe is hungry," and she added dramatically, "Ya habibi, Ya habibi, (My loved one)", in Arabic, as she heard her son's cry.

When they reached the man, the cry "Bi-ism Allah," escaped from his lips, as Najlia snatched her babe to her breast.

The husband of the woman, appeared quite relieved that he had at last found his wife. He asked Michael no questions, but greeted him cordially.

Michael recollected that he had seen this Druse before.

After warning the man that Beth el Ateah would have him before the judge if he did not mend his ways and live peacefully with his wife, Michael turned to leave.

However, the Druse in an apologetic attitude, asked him to forgive him, as he had been drinking far too much wine and arak lately.

Finally, Michael bade the man and his wife good night, and returned to the mill, where the man in charge had resigned himself to a full twenty-four hour duty.

CHAPTER XX

From now on it seemed that one obstacle after another came in our path, but we were there, young and old, to hurdle it.

The first, was the fact that Michael, for the first time in his life, could not afford to hire help of any sort. Our new home apparently, just about took his last dollar.

Another thing, Michael could not even handle an axe properly. Manual labor was never in his line. Ferade could put rings around him there, as young as he was. Even the girls knew how to handle a wood saw.

Michael seemed very happy to know that we could actually do these things, and he appeared very much surprised as well.

We had spent hours at the Reserve, watching the Indians saw and chop their wood daily. We had noted too, that it was an Indian's daily chore, for they never seemed to have any wood ahead for the next day.

Now and again, we would ask them if they would let us use their tools. After some coaxing they would usually give in and let us use them, little knowing at the time what a blessing it had proved to be.

One day Shafia informed us that we must have a garden, if we were to have any vegetables that year.

There was no time to lose, so we all went out and had the garden situation looked over. It was far from encouraging. Where the land appeared easy to clear, it was practically all white sandy loam. But we had heard that, though this sort of loam might be good for growing potatoes, it was not so good for small seed. The small seed would just bake and shrivel in the hot sun.

Lower down toward the lake, the soil appeared a deep brown, and seemed to hold some moisture. This however, had its drawback too, for to clear it, we had to remove huge clumps of birch and large spruce, including the stump of giant white poplar.

Luckily for us the carpenter who built our home, cut most of the logs close by, so that it made a small clearing around the house. This saved us the trouble of cutting these huge trees. There were only some small ones left and the stumps of the others.

Early one morning in May, Michael, Ferade and myself, set out to clear the spot for our garden. Michael had never tackled anything like this before. He knew however how to go about it, in a way, in which we could accomplish the work with as little effort as possible.

Michael did not want to overtax our young strength. "See" he said, demonstrating with the hoe, "just scrape the earth all along and close around the top roots of the stump, or tree, and when it is well exposed we will chop them out."

This we did, all taking turns with the hoe and axe. It was slow progress, but we managed to pull a couple of huge ones, and some smaller stumps that first day, without any of us feeling any the worse for it.

In a week or so, we had a space large enough cleared away for our small seed. A few days later we had a much larger patch cleared on higher ground for the potatoes.

It took us another week to prepare it properly, then one of our very few neighbors plowed it for us.

Shafia and the smaller children raked the garden over and handled practically all the small roots. Then with Shafia helping and supervising the planting, we finally managed to get the garden all in.

Once the garden was planted, we all took the opportunity of exploring the country about us. So far, we were pretty well all confined to that little corner of the homestead.

Of course there was no school on the Peninsula, but we had our school books. Michael and Shafia made sure we did a certain amount of studying each day.

The older children helped the younger ones with their studies, and we used empty orange crates and apple boxes for seats and desks.

We studied upstairs to get away from the youngsters and the baby.

Almost every morning, quite early, the entire family would stroll down to the lake shore which was a short distance from the house.

The younger children would be carried piggy back by the older ones. When we were tired of them, and made an effort to unload our burdens, they would invariably cry, "Please carry me as far as the spruce tree." The spruce tree was an exceptionally huge one that grew alongside of the road, about half the distance between the house and lakeshore.

Exciting moments invariably accompanied these morning trips to the lake. Michael had several cotton and linen fishing nets that were at one time sold to his Indian customers who after using them for some time, discovered they could not pay for them and returned them to him. Some of these nets were in rather poor condition, but others were fairly good.

We were making good use of them now. Michael and Ferade would pull away from the shore with a skiff, and set one of these a short distance out in the bay.

Next morning, while we all sat on the shore and waited, they would go out and lift the net, bringing their catch in. We never saw so many goldeyes in all our lives before.

After that, Michael would only set a short piece of netting at a time, because we were catching more fish than we could ever eat.

Shafia always smoked a number of these goldeyes. She had been taught how to do this by an Indian woman, so when we were tired of fresh fish we ate the smoked ones.

CHAPTER XXI

Often after the nets were lifted we would prepare to have our noon meal on the beach in real camp style.

Shafia would mix and put together a bannock at home, and when we arrived at the beach she would place it before the fire we had built for the purpose quite early, so that there were lots of good hot coals.

The boys would scale fish, and after cleaning them, would wade out and wash them in the lake. Then they would hang them on slim willows that were shoved deep in the sand, and in a position where the fish hung over the fire until they were toasted to a golden brown.

All we had to do then, was to take a table knife and scrape the flesh off, leaving the fish bones as clean as a whistle. We would sprinkle on a little salt and presto, you never tasted anything so delicious.

Michael loved fish cooked in this style, and so did Butrus the sailor and diver from Tripoli. This was a favorite way of cooking fish in Syria and Lebanon. I am sure that "Jesus of Nazareth" and his Disciples, cooked the fish they caught in that fashion many times on the shores of Galilee.

The bay appeared to be calm so often then; the sand so soft and white, and the beach so broad.

One day that summer, when the children came down to bathe in the bay, we saw a short distance away from us a small herd of red deer, who were apparently fleeing from the deerfly which, at that time of the year, were real pests.

The deer, some standing in the water, and others laying partially covered in the lake, had made their way across the Peninsula, and into the water to get away from these stinging and blood thirsty pests.

Sights like this were quite common then.

In the still of the evening, if you so happened to wander to the lakeside, you would

be sure to see rabbits, weasels, and sometime mink, stealing down to get a drink of water.

Usually about July the first we began to see signs of ripe blue-berries. Most of the saskatoons had already ripened, and were hanging in deep purple clusters. Shafia canned several quarts of them.

So far we had scarcely seen any human beings about. There were, besides us, three other families who were permanent residents then of the Peninsula.

On the North East point lived the first family to ever settle here. He was an Easterner, from old Loyalist stock I think, who came to Canada from the United States of America. His name was Hank, old Hank every one called him.

A more colorful or romantic character you would never meet anywhere. Hank's fine hospitality was a by word in the North, and his name was a legend all along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, from the Red River to Fisher Branch, and from the Winnipeg River to Norway House.

There was no end to the tales Old Hank could tell you from the time he left his Eastern home, as a very young man. He had roughed it and toughed it right across Canada, then he finally married a young woman near Selkirk who was a descendant of the first Red River Settlers.

Hank then came and settled on what must have been then a wild uninhabitated little Island. His means of travel then, was by boat in summer and by dog team in winter.

The Hank family still had two dog teams when we arrived on the Peninsula. They were the largest huskies we had ever seen. One could see at a glance that they were well taken care of.

The huskies were kept chained down at the bottom of a steep bank of the lake shore, where water was accessible to them at all times.

Apparently Hank, when picking a spot for his home, picked one that matched his unique personality. His home was built on a high rocky bank of the Peninsula, overlooking the

lake, where one could see the sun rise in all its glorious beauty, over the expanding waters of the Bay.

Hank's wife was a slight person with large deep blue eyes and very long dark lashes. They had a fairly large family, all young people in their early teens, when we first met them.

The two attractive blonde girls who came and paid us a visit while we were camping on Big Elk Island, were Hank's two daughters.

The girls were almost as popular as their father. They were very easily the most attractive girls on the East side of the lake.

The boys were equally well known too, for their good shooting and their clever handling of dog-teams. They were also noted for being the best fishermen in these parts.

We were very happy about having such fine neighbors, and I often thought in later years what a nuisance we must have been at times, knowing so little as we did then about everything in general, and with what patience they handled every situation.

Our other neighbors lived at the Inn which was situated on the extreme North West point of the Peninsula.

There the Dominion Government pier lay just off the point in that lovely bay, which is just one of the Peninsula's beautiful spots.

Still another neighbor, lived on a homestead where now lies the Peninsula's Golf Course greens.

CHAPTER XXII

Our vegetable garden was a little disappointing, but we did not expect too much from it the first year. However, the beans seemed to flourish more than any of the other vegetables, cheering us up considerably, for green beans were a great favorite in our family.

Shafia would serve it in Arabian style, as were most of our dishes, with tomatoes from our garden, and lots of herbs for flavoring. So we were quite happy about it after all.

We had all we could eat of the green beans, then Shafia put the remainder away in a five gallon crock, with lots of salt to preserve it for the winter.

It was the same method that her mother used in Lebanon for keeping vegetables for months at a time.

Berry picking, and working in the garden

kept us all pretty well occupied that summer.

It was not until the early fall, that life really began to take on an aspect of joy and adventure for us.

The wild Manitoba maples, with the evergreens towering high above them, made a very gay fringe of red and gold around us.

Exploring the Peninsula started in real earnest then. There were an abundance of wild game everywhere we went, grouse, partridge, rabbits and ducks.

We heard of the lagoon that lay on the west side of the bay, and proceeded across the Peninsula to find it. When we finally found it, it looked enchanting in the evening sunset.

Hundreds of wild fowl of every description swam and dived on its smooth surface.

Further inward, where the tall reeds hid us from their sight, were dozens of huge fat Mallards, that were so heavy they could scarcely leave the water in their flight upward.

The sand beach, just like the one on the east side of the Peninsula, was white and

smooth, and felt so wonderful under our bare feet.

When we arrived home that evening, I sat down and tried to imitate Sister Adelaide, of the Roman Catholic Mission on the Winnipeg River, by painting a picture of the lagoon, with its wild ducks and tall green reeds.

The picture when it was completed, must have looked alright to the members of the family. They all appeared to be quite enthusiastic about it. My younger sisters tacked it up on the rough pine boards above our bed, where it stayed for years.

Later that fall, after all the autumn leaves had snuggled close to mother earth, we turned to rabbit hunting.

The early frost had come, and the ground under our feet had a crust on it.

Michael was very fond of rabbit hunting. It reminded him of chasing hare in the old country. Almost every evening we would follow him across the Peninsula, to where Bay View is now situated.

There were no wide paths then, only

numerous narrow trails, running into one another. Most of them original moose and deer trails which were still in wide use then by a few of the former, and many of the latter animals.

Coming face to face with these beasts of the forest, was almost a daily occurence.

About a hundred yards away from the bay, a heavy fluff of balsam, their slim fragile looking branches, interlocking one another, had shut out the sky, and almost the daylight. We would imagine then, that we were in Robin Hood's Nottingham Forest.

There wasn't a blade of grass to be seen anywhere there, just straight needles of balsam, and hundreds of cushions of velvety green moss.

Michael would sit down on a fallen log and wait with the shot gun in his hands. The children, all down on their knees in the background, with hushed voices and shining eyes, waited breathlessly for the exciting moment.

Then Bang, a terrific scramble from the

rear, and we all darted for the victim. "Hurray, rabbit stew and dumplings for dinner tomorrow," those who managed to reach it first would cry.

Though money was as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth that year, we always had plenty of good nourishing food on which we all thrived.

There was very little sickness in our large family, and Michael attributed it to the healthy environment of the Peninsula, with its soothing pine-scented air.

CHAPTER XXIII

The following spring, late in April, the ice began breaking everywhere on Lake Winnipeg. Flocks upon flocks of wild geese were winging their way overhead on their flight northward.

The lagoon, we noted, the fall before, had provided an ideal stopping place for wild geese as well as other wild fowl on their south bound journey.

Now many of them took the same advantage, and made a brief stop here on their way back. All through the stillness of the night, we could hear their honk, honk, honk, and the flap of their wings, as they settled down or arose off the lagoon waters.

Then one early calm morning, a strange drumming sound reached our ears. It came from the direction of the lagoon. All that day the drumming kept up, and late on into the evening.

Next day at day-break, through an open window, the same drumming floated to us while we were yet in bed. Our curiosity aroused more than ever now, we hastily jumped out of bed, determined to solve the mystery without further apprehension.

There was still a little snow on the ground, so we pulled on our low moccasin rubbers. Michael and Shafia could not afford high ones, with so many feet to attire. We were so excited and bent on investigating this most mysterious of all sounds, that we scarcely bothered about any breakfast.

The party consisted of four of the older children. Michael and Shafia we felt, were almost as curious as we were, for they quite placidly agreed to let us go.

Ferade and myself had our .22 calibre rifles with us. We did not intend to kill anything, they were just taken as a precautionary measure, should anything unusual arise.

Michael never allowed us to shoot any bird or animal in spring. To make us understand the serious consequences of it, he would say,

"It is a sin to kill anything in the spring, for that is the time of the year when all birds and animals are having their young."

Michael never referred to the law whenever he made this kind of statement. He always tried to make us rely on our conscience to do the right thing.

When we finally reached the lagoon, we received the surprise of our young lives. On the lagoon, where ice still floated in small patches, were two beautiful white swans, swimming neck to neck among the hundreds of wild geese and ducks.

Then above the rather muffled quacks of geese and wild ducks, came the same monotonous drumming sound. And looking up, we saw before us in the distance, on the hard white sand of the beach across the lagoon, a circle of hundreds of wild grouse.

The birds were moving about slowly and in rhythm to the drumming sound of their wings. We stood there mystified. We had never expected or even dreamed of seeing anything like this. Hastily we retraced our

steps homeward, and told them all of the strange sight we had seen. Later, Michael and Shafia, together with all the children, came and saw this wonderful sight for themselves. I can plainly remember my young sister Labebe darting ahead of us with the boys, her large dark eyes shining, and her wavy brown hair blowing in the wind about her lovely face.

Year after year, the two white swans would return to the lagoon, and we would always look forward anxiously to seeing them there. There too, the wild grouse would come every year for their spring merry-making.

In those days the mail was brought into the Peninsula by Old Daniel, who lived with his family on the south bank of Traverse Bay. Old Daniel made weekly trips to Grand Marais, where the nearest Post Office was situated.

I imagine Old Daniel must have come from good old hardy Red River stock, for most of the time he went the distance and back on foot. He was given twenty-five cents by each

family for this service, which was a weekly one, and he always seemed so happy to receive it.

Old Daniel lived to the great age of one hundred and three years, active until the very end. Many Old-Timers had already passed to their reward when he died, but many of their children and grandchildren were there at his funeral, to pay tribute to the passing of a good Old-Timer.

CHAPTER XXIV

Raising a family of eight children, on a rather isolated Peninsula was no easy job. Michael and Shafia put their heads together, and began to figure things out.

"We must have a school for the children," Michael said one day. "They cannot go without an education any longer. I must see what I can do about it."

Very shortly afterward, in the early summer, Michael made a trip on the "Pilgrim". The "Pilgrim", a large smart up to date motor boat, was then making routine trips between Winnipeg and the Peninsula under the capable direction of Captain Anderson.

Upon reaching the City of Winnipeg, Michael went directly to see the Department of Education, and after explaining the conditions on the Peninsula, which included the number of children there, the Department promised to consider the situation.

Shortly afterward, at the opening of the fall school term, the Department of Education managed to rent an empty house, which was available then, for use as a school-room, and sent out a young lady school teacher to take over.

Other problems arose later, which were very vital ones too. While Michael and Shafia seemed to be able to manage the food situation with very little difficulty, there was the fact however, that the children must have warm winter clothing, and now, school books were added necessities.

One must remember that at that time, there were no family allowances issued by the Government each month, to help in situations such as this.

However, Michael still had several fishing nets stored in our attic. So one day he sent word to a couple of Indians that he knew, who lived at the Indian Reserve on the Winnipeg River. Indians whom he could trust to fish the nets for him.

One Jacob Morriseau, a fine elderly fellow

who could tell you accurate tales of early days anywhere on Lake Winnipeg, and Northern Manitoba in general.

He was a man you could trust anywhere. Old Jacob came, bringing with him another Indian, and they both fished for Michael all that winter.

The fish were shipped to West Selkirk by team then, and sold there to a fish company.

All that winter, Shafia had been planning ways and means of making some extra money.

The Peninsula was rapidly becoming a rather famous summer resort for a refined class of professional people, who appreciated the quiet and natural beauties of the place. Here they could relax, and have what one might call, truly a holiday.

Though the Peninsula was only about a hundred miles from the City of Winnipeg, its sponsors had kept it fresh, natural, and untouched by any artificial program.

Here, doctors, lawyers, professors, school principals, teachers of music and art,

engineers and professional people of every description came.

Shafia began to realize the fact that there was a chance to earn some extra money for the growing family from a vegetable garden. They would sell garden vegetables the following summer to the city visitors.

After talking things over with Michael, they decided to buy a horse, and after some effort they managed to purchase one.

The horse was a big black animal, and though he was quite old, they felt it was all they could afford, at the time, and the animal would serve their purpose very well.

The family found to their delight, that the garden soil was very much easier to handle the following spring. And we all worked hard to try and grow as many vegetables as possible for our own use and to sell to the summer people as well.

Time seemed to fly, as it usually does, when people are happy and busy. So it really did not seem very long before late June arrived, and with it came a few early vegetables.

The effect of the hot sun on sandy loam seemed to bring the vegetables to a premature development that gave the green beans and cucumbers, a sweet, succulent and mellow flavor.

By this time, we had also managed to buy a small buggy to attach to Old Tom the horse. Everything was complete now, and we were all set to start selling the vegetables.

The first morning was really an exciting one for all the Ateah family. Shafia was up before any one that morning, and silently stole down into the garden, regardless of the heavy dews that dampened her skirts.

Soon the dew had dampened her shoes so much, that she decided she would be better off without them. So off came the canvas shoes. Shafia felt much happier now, the soft clean sand under-foot was damp and warm, and gave her a nice exhilarating feeling.

Beside her was a large wicker basket, one of the many baskets made by the Indians, and bought from them at the Reserve. Into

the baskets in large luscious handfulls went the green beans, and into another basket went the yellow ones.

A little later, sounds from the kitchen doorway told Shafia that the family were up and about.

By this time she had most of the beans picked, just the way she wanted it. Sometimes the children were a bit careless, especially early in the season, when Shafia would take particular care not to injure the plants in any way. She wanted each bean stalk to yield as many beans as possible.

Ferade brought the horse in from the small pasture, and after putting the harness on him, hitched it to the buggy.

The back of the buggy was loaded with the vegetables by the children, while Shafia had her breakfast, and got herself ready for her first money making adventure.

It was about nine o'clock when Shafia and Ferade started out that morning, with Ferade driving Old Tom. Ferade, though quite

young then (only eleven perhaps), was quite grown-up and capable.

We all bade them good-bye, laughing good-naturedly, and wondering to ourselves, how would they make out on this, their first trip. Old Tom was slow, but as we watched them until they were out of our sight, we thought Tom was just the kind of horse for a slow job, like stopping every little while to sell vegetables.

Shafia and Ferade returned to the homestead about two o'clock that afternoon. The children couldn't have shown more excitement at a circus. We were all bubbling over with questions.

Freda and Eddy unhitched the horse, while Ferade went into the house for a bite to eat, accompanied by Shafia.

When Shafia entered the house, she walked up to Michael and slipping off the bead covered leather Indian bag that hung from her shoulder, she handed it to him, and asked him to count the money that jingled so pleasantly within it.

This Michael did, and was amazed at the amount the bag carried. For it was a long time since he saw quite so much money, and more so too, since he was a bit reluctant about the idea at first.

After a cup of tea, in which she was accompanied by Michael, Shafia related to the family her first experience at selling vegetables.

"The people were all so very nice, and seemed quite happy to see us," she explained. "They all praised the fine vegetables, and asked us to be sure and call again. It made me feel so good. I wish you would come with me Michael. It would do your heart good to meet such fine people. Some asked too," continued Shafia, "if we could supply them with fresh pickeral fillets. I promised them I would, because it would mean more money for us."

"We could save most of this money, and buy supplies for the family this coming winter. Then we would not have to worry as we did last winter."

After that, Michael accompanied Shafia often, and they got to be a familiar sight, on the lovely rock and heavily treed avenues of the Peninsula.

CHAPTER XXV

Life continued pretty much the same for the Ateah family, for years on the Peninsula.

Eventually a railroad came in, and now Michael could sell some of the fine timber that grew so plentiful on the homestead. He would hire a few Indians to cut the wood, and Ferade and Freda would haul it by team to the box-car, where it would be shipped and sold in Winnipeg.

Thus, by fishing, wood and vegetable selling every summer and keeping a few cows and chickens, Michael and Shafia were able to make a good living and give their large family a fair education as well.

Shafia loved the summer visitors and would be looking forward all the long winter, for the first fast train to arrive. Then she could go down and meet her "fine customers" as she called them.

Years later, in early May 1937, Ferade, now happily married and the father of two fine children, a boy and girl, lay awake in his bed at his home on the Manimic Mink Ranch.

It was very early in the morning, about four thirty. He could hear the songs and warblings of the many birds that made Ferade Ateah's estate their Canadian home every summer.

Above the birds varied and endless sounds, rose the chirpings of countless squirrels and chipmunks, mingled now and again with the squeaks of mink kits. Sounds that Ferade had come to accept as part of life on the Peninsula.

Suddenly Ferade rose up, and tiptoed gently so that he would not awaken the children, and went to the large french windows that overlooked the lake.

The morning sun, rising slowly like a huge ball of fire, appeared to have just left the soft mist that lay over the still waters of the bay.

There was so much Ferade wanted to do that day, and it was a glorious morning. Silently and rather reluctantly, he left the window and proceeded to dress. Bonzo the dog was barking, out in the yard below, and Ferade wondered who it could be coming at that early hour.

Then as if sensing that there was something wrong, he hurried down the stairway, and out into the yard.

"Yoohoo, Yoohoo, Yoohoo." It was the familiar voice of Shafia calling. Ferade stood paralysed for a second, then remembered suddenly there was something desperately wrong at the homestead. Shafia would not be calling like this at this hour.

Ferade wondered too, as he hurriedly ran toward his old home, how Shafia's voice ever reached him so plainly at that distance. On he sped, for he was lithe and swift of foot, and soon reached the gate.

Shafia came running to meet him, tears streaming down her cheeks as she cried in anguish, "Your father, Ferade, your father,

I think he is gone. It happened so quickly, I cannot believe it."

Gently Ferade, putting his mother aside, sprang into the house to where Michael lay on his bed, and swiftly caught his wrist. His father's pulse was very very weak, only a faint throb, that could scarcely be felt.

Holding his head very close to Michael's, Ferade sobbed, "Poppa, Poppa, wake up."

By this time we were all summoned to Michael's bedside, by our youngest brother Johnny.

Around Michael's bed we knelt, Sophia, Ferade, Freda, Edward, Samuel, Johnny and myself. My youngest sister Margaret, who was very young then, clung pathetically to Shafia's arm, as she stood at the head of the bed, and sobbed broken-heartedly.

Louisa, whom Michael had always affectionately called Labebe, in Arabic, and Pansy, pretty round faced Pansy, with her natural curly brown hair (the little girl that was born to Michael and Shafia on the Winnipeg River Reserve) were not there to bid Michael fare-

well. They were both on duty as registered nurses, in a Winnipeg hospital.

Three days later, on the lawn in front of the old log farm home, and under the huge pine tree that he had so often leaned back against, and which reminded him of the cedars of Lebanon, as he lay reading in the warm sun, lay Michael's casket.

It was a glorious May afternoon, and friends from every district round about, came to pay their last respects. It happened too, that the funeral took place on a week-end, which made it possible for many of Michael and Shafia's old Syrian friends from Winnipeg to arrive. Among them, Mrs. Abraham Dagdick a wonderful and distinguished looking person, at whose home, Michael and Shafia were married.

As we stood there, Ferade and myself, with Shafia between us, I knew, that in that late afternoon sun, spirits on wings of gossamer were floating softly about, weaving their way in and out among the tall thick branches of pine. Spirits of our Syrian ancestors escort-

ing Michael to his new home, where the cedars of Lebanon, high over still waters, would shade him forever.

The days were long and dreary for Shafia for many many months to come. The lovely pine trails that stretched here and there, through the old homestead to the children's homes, were very lonely now, with Michael away from her side.

Shafia missed too, the comforting and relaxing conversations in Arabic, which she and Michael always used when together. The children, though they understood Arabic, preferred English, which Michael and Shafia realized was the only proper thing for them.

There was however, one comforting thought for Shafia, and that came two years later on an April day, when once more, her heart was torn by the sudden tragic death of Ferade in an accident.

Ferade, who practically all his life had handled, now and then, log upon log of timber was fatally injured by one a few yards away from his ranch.

Michael, Shafia confided to her remaining children, was spared what she knew would have been the pain of a hundred deaths to him, in the tragic passing of Ferade.

No one understood as well as Shafia that no tragedy could be greater to a Syrian, than to lose his first-born son, of whom, from the day the child was born, the father was addressed afterward by all who knew him, as "Abu-Ferade". Meaning, the Father of Ferade.

CHAPTER XXVI

On October eighteenth, 1948, the (Victoria Beach) local of the Manitoba Fur Breeders Association, held a field day on the Peninsula, which proved to be the most significant one to date. Doug Laing, who was president of the Fur Breeders of Manitoba at the time, decided it would be a good idea to hold a field day at Victoria Beach, and together with my brother Johnny who was on the executive, they thought Pine Crest would be an appropriate place for the occasion.

After asking our permission, Rex and I assured them that we would only be too pleased to accept the honour. And immediately the Ateah family proceeded to make preparations for the event. It was decided among us that the outside visitors would be divided into groups, with each group going to one of the several Ateah fur ranches, where a hot meal was prepared for them after their long

journey. And let me assure you, that it took some pluck on the part of those gallant gentlemen that day to drive their cars over the existing road, which led to this isolated Peninsula. How they ever managed that late autumn day was a marvel.

And what a crowd. Ferade would have loved it. There were over a hundred ranchers and members of the fur trade and press present. A prominent New York authority on fine furs, George Mayers, manager of a leading fur auction house in New York, and his son, were the animal judges. Long low tables were assembled from broad pine boards, and placed on the lawn in front of the ranch house. It had been snowing the day before, and the large wide spreading juniper, with a spruce and balsam close by, gave the atmosphere a most picturesque effect.

On the tables, the mink ranchers of the district who had brought live mink with them, placed their animals in their various classes to be judged for their good points, and

were given prizes accordingly. Chris Lang, managing editor of that worthy "Fur of Canada" who was a dear friend of Alfred Ferade, and a guest of ours that day, took down the names of the prize winners, while our president Doug Laing, gave out the prize cards.

Many prizes were won by the local mink ranchers, and tribute was paid the ranchers of the district, by the judge, for the fine quality of the animals shown.

Later, refreshments were served by the ranchers' wives in the ranch home.

The stars were appearing, and a full moon shone brightly high above the dark thick pines, bringing out the beauty of the Peninsula, as the guests seated themselves comfortably in their cars, and prepared for their southward journey and civilization. Among the guests were my sisters Labebe and Margaret. It was nice to have Margaret with us that day, for she was always so very interested in mink, mostly because of Ferade whom she adored as her big brother. Margaret

always seemed to have a pet mink while she lived here, but since she got married and went to live in the City of Winnipeg, she had to content herself with just a mink neckpiece.

A deep sense of lonliness fell over us, as the dim tail-lights of the last car turned the bend and went out of sight, at the bottom of the hill.

Spring and summer, fall and winter, came and went, and every season took on a different aspect and phase in the line of mink ranching.

Among the most exotic of the latest mutation mink on fur farms to date, are the Breath-of-Spring Silverblu, the Royal Pastel, and Snow White. The Royal Pastel has all the soft alluring beauty of the wild mink, and under experienced breeders supervision, are more uniform in color than the wild mink. Most of these fine types of animals were on ranches on the Peninsula, and all types were in Pine Crest, including the Royal Sapphire.

One evening in late December 1950, as we sat before our fireplace, relaxing after the

strenuous job of getting our pelts away to the auction houses, we waited for the C.B.C. news which usually comes over the radio at nine p.m. Central Standard Time, from C.B.W. Manitoba. And as we sat and listened in silence while the latest in world events were disclosed to us by the announcer, we waited with interest to hear what the C.B.C. News Round-up had in store for us that night.

Then, marvel of marvels, the C.B.C. was going to tell us all about a big fur show, which was held lately in one of our large Canadian Cities on the Pacific coast, and of the latest mutation, the superb and breath-taking Sapphire mink.

Hastily, I called our two sons Glen and Lorne, from the kitchen where they were busy completing plans for the local hockey team. Our young daughter Marina Laila, was at school in Winnipeg at the time. Like Rex and myself, the children were full of enthusiasm where mink were concerned.

Quietly they gathered about the radio, listening breathlessly as the announcer des-

cribed the Sapphire. Yes, we all agreed, what they said about the sapphire was true. They were the most beautiful mink imaginable. And when they eventually come out in the finished garment at exclusive fur shops, women would swoon at the sight of a superb Sapphire mink coat or cape. With words to that effect the announcer concluded the broadcast.

I looked up at our young sons, and their faces lit up with pride, for on the Pine Crest Fur Farm, were two of the most beautiful Royal Sapphire males one could ever wish to see. These two Sapphires were produced from some di-hybrids we had purchased the fall before. With the world at large, informed now of these exotic mutations we knew that a great future for the sapphire was assured.

With the C.B.C. Round-up now over, the boys returned to their hockey program in the kitchen, leaving Rex and myself in the dim glow of the fire before us. A soft semi-classical tune on the violin was floating from the radio now. I leaned back in my comfort-

able chair with eyelids closed, and thought of Shafia, inwardly saying a little prayer of thankfulness, for I knew she was very happy and comfortable with Pansy and Tommy for the winter. In Winnipeg, Shafia could come and go at leisure, visiting and chatting the time away with old friends.

Then I saw Ferade once again, as I had seen him a thousand times before, pictured in a dream I had of him shortly after his passing away. Alfred Ferade, in his high leather boots, down on one knee, on the smooth hard surface of a sand-bar on the beach. His grey flannel shirt opened at the throat as usual, and his fine head with the thick dark curls clamped close on his brow. His head was thrown back, and he was looking straight ahead, across the calm waters of the bay into the pastel softness of a misty rose and lavender dawn.